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Red, White, And Sushi:

The Journey of Sushi in the United States from 1893-1960s

Kristopher Kozlowski

A Thesis in the Field of History

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

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Abstract

This thesis investigated the journey of sushi in the United States before the 1960s, which is when previous examinations of sushi claim that it made its first appearance in the United States. This study traced sushi's expansion in the continental United States and the overlooked then-United States territory of Hawaii. After careful investigation, this research illustrates that sushi had been in the United States for more than sixty years before the popular narrative. Proof of this was accomplished by combing through newspaper articles in decades prior to the 1960s that provided recipes on how to prepare sushi and by examining advertisements for restaurants, carnivals, and school functions that offered sushi for purchase at these places. Cookbooks and menus before the 1960s were also inspected for mentions of sushi. My research revealed that as the years got closer to the 1960s, sushi became more and more prevalent in the U.S. media and became a topic of notoriety. However, it is clear from my research that sushi was present in American cuisine well before the 1960s.

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Lastly, thank you to San Francisco, California's National Japanese American Historical Society staff. All your help has been greatly appreciated.

Dedication

To my mother, Darlene Sabio,

Your sacrifices have not gone unnoticed.

Without your help, none of this would have been possible.

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Introduction

The fishy and vegetable abominations know as "Japanese food" can only be swallowed and digested by a few, and that [is] after long practice.

- Isabella Bird, 1878[1]

I first tried sushi in May of 2004. After wrestling practice, I was closing the school with my coach, Stephen Favata, who had just returned from wrestling in Japan. While there, he became well-versed in a cuisine that was still exotic to me: sushi. He asked if I ever had sushi, and much like Isabella Bird, I replied, "I'd never eat raw fish. That's disgusting." He insisted that we would get familiar fish, like tuna and salmon. I walked into the restaurant later that evening, never imagining that I was about to eat the most unique and delicious meal of my life. It goes without saying that I have been eating sushi ever since. Like many Americans, I started eating sushi when I decided to make healthier food choices. It soon became my go-to dish every Monday before refereeing adult flag football for the Tampa Parks and Recreation Department. I could get a box or two of Philly rolls from Publix on sale on Mondays for $5.00.[2] It was a convenient, light meal, and a healthier option than McDonald's or Wendy's. I even bought a Sushi Bazooka to make my own sushi. The cylindrical apparatus, which resembles a plastic caulking gun, opens to reveal slots where you can place rice and any other ingredients

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[1] Isabella L. Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: An Account of Travels in the Interior Including Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines of Nikkô and Isé*, Miss Bird's Japan (London: J. Murray, 1880), 19.
[2] Roseanne Harper, "Publix's Sushi Bar Running Swimmingly," *Supermarket News*, September 14, 1998, sec. Fresh foods, 49. http://global.factiva.com/redir/default.aspx?P=sa&an=SN00000020040612du9e00739&cat=a&ep=ASE

you want. Next, you close the cylinder and push a handle that places the rice onto the seaweed. From there, you roll the seaweed, covering the rice, and voila! You have sushi.[3]

But how and when did sushi get to the U.S., and how has it progressed over time to become the ubiquitous cuisine that it is today? Notable academics including Theodore Bestor and Katarzyna J. Cwiertka argue that sushi did not become popular in the U.S. until the 1960s, and that prior to that, it had very little presence in the U.S. media. This is not the case. In this thesis, I argue that sushi appeared as early as 1899 in the U.S. media and grew in popularity from that point on. However, it did so quietly, as imposing political and social events stifled sushi's development and growth in the U.S. for the first half of the 20th century. This thesis uncovers a plethora of media mentions of sushi during this time, and while sushi technically exploded into the American psyche in the 1960s, it had a secure hold in American culture since its arrival.

Sushi Defined

A Japanese immigrant named Inota Tawa gave his description of sushi to author Kazuo Ito while Tawa was working on the railroads in Idaho in 1893. The interview appeared in Tawa's subsequent book, Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America, in which the author interviewed Issei (immigrants) about their experiences coming to the United States. Tawa's description provided the first placement of sushi in the U.S. in 1893. Tawa recalled working on the railroad in Idaho for $1.15 a month. He

[3] "Sushi Tool Prevents Rolling Mishap," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, April 10, 2019, F4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/552813511/.

mentioned that on payday he would buy canned salmon and rice, "cook the rice, put vinegar over the rice and salmon, pile that on top of the rice. We called it sushi."[4]

Throughout history, the definition of sushi has not been so cut and dry. A Chinese dictionary written in the year 230 CE defines sushi as "fish pickled in rice."[5] One example of this type of sushi is funazushi, which relies on lactic acid to prepare the fish by stuffing carp with rice and letting it ferment for up to a month.[6] Today, people are most familiar with maki sushi, which consists of a roll constructed from seaweed and rice; flavored with vinegar and salt; and has one or more ingredients rolled inside, such as fish, shellfish, and vegetables.[7] The other notable form today is nigiri sushi, which was first documented at a festival two centuries ago in Kaga, Japan.[8] Also popular is nigiri, a small mound of vinegared rice shaped like an oval, upon which rests a traditional ingredient, such as raw tuna, vegetables, or shellfish.[9] A lesser-known sushi dish is chirashi sushi (chirashizushi), which is served on a plate or bowl with ingredients scattered over vinegared rice.[10] Other varieties of sushi include hako, which is pressed in a box; inari, stuffed fried tofu; and the cone-shaped temaki sushi, among others.[11] As illustrated above, there are many types of sushi, not just the familiar maki roll that we are

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[4] Kazuo Ito, *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America* (Japanese Community Service, 1973), 293–94.
[5] Eric C. Rath, *Oishii: The History of Sushi* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), 19.
[6] Eric C. Rath, *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 12; Rath, *Oishii*, 10.
[7] T. Philip Terry, *Terry's Japanese Empire, Including Korea, and Formosa, with Chapters on Manchuria, the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the Chief Ocean Routes to Japan; A Guidebook for Travelers* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), xlvi.
[8] Rath, *Oishii*, 51.
[9] Senkichirō Katsumata, *Notes on Japanese Cuisine* (Tokyo: Nippon Printing Company, 1946), 22; Aya Kagawa, *Japanese Cookbook 100 Favorite Japanese Recipes for Western Cooks*, vol. 11 (Tokyo: Hosokawa Printing Company, 1949), 116–19.
[10] Kagawa, *Japanese Cookbook*, 11:124.
[11] Terry, *Terry's Japanese Empire*, xlvi; "Chef Ben-Chan's Fun Ideas," *Honolulu Advertiser*, April 2, 1978, 156, https://www.newspapers.com/image/262511320/.

used to buying in the grocery store and restaurants. Sushi has truly become a staple for many Americans and shows no signs of slowing down.

Background

One way sushi arrived in the United States was with Japanese immigrants, but emigration restrictions limited such travel for decades. In 1868, Emperor Mutsuhito, later known as Emperor Meiji, deposed Japan's former military rulers, the Tokugawa Shogunate. who had been in power since 1603. This ended the Edo/Tokugawa period.[12] The first Japanese immigrants, Issei, illegally left Japan in 1868 to work in the sugar plantations of Hawaii.[13] Some Issei then emigrated to California, where they worked in many forms of agriculture—grapes, oranges, asparagus, beans, and rice were just some of what they farmed. In Washington, the Issei worked as oyster farmers.[14] Immigration on a larger scale did not begin until 1885, when Emperor Meiji legalized emigration for Japanese citizens.[15] That same year, Hawaii signed an agreement with Japan that allowed a large number of laborers to emigrate to Hawaii.[16] By 1890, there were 5,000 Japanese immigrants living in Hawaii and 1,000 in California.[17] On July 7, 1898, Hawaii became a

[12] Frank F. Chuman, *The Bamboo People: The Law and Japanese Americans* (Del Mar, CA.: Publisher's Inc., 1976), 3; Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 4th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 11.
[13] Paul R. Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformations of an Ethnic Group* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 11.
[14] Gary Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 19–21; Masakazu Iwata, "The Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture," *Agricultural History* 36, no. 1 (1962): 30, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3740395; Kathleen Whalen Fry, "Transforming the Tidelands: Japanese Labor in Washington's Oystering Communities before 1942," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 102, no. 3 (2011): 134, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23249617.
[15] Spickard, *Japanese Americans*, 8,12.
[16] Alex Ladenson, "The Background of the Hawaiian Japanese Labor Convention of 1886," *Pacific Historical Review* 9, no. 4 (1940): 394, https://doi.org/10.2307/3632950.
[17] Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 118.

U.S. territory, and it was then subject to the laws of the United States.[18] The increasing population of Japanese immigrants in the Pacific coast area looking for work led to an anti-Japanese movement that culminated in 1907-08 with the "Gentlemen's Agreement." This informal agreement, endorsed by President Theodore Roosevelt, was an attempt to ease tensions between the two nations by forcing San Francisco to repeal its Japanese American school segregation order in exchange for "barring the [laboring] classes coming from Japan and conversely satisfy Japan with a treaty that abandoned any racially discriminatory clauses or language."[19] This order drastically reduced the number of single male immigrants from Japan. Furthermore, in 1929, the United States enacted a discriminatory quota system that limited the number of immigrants from Asian countries while not restricting immigrants from Great Britain and Europe. An example quota from 1924 read, "Great Britain and Northern Ireland: 65,720, Germany: 25,957, Poland: 6,524, Italy: 5,802, Japan: 100; and China, 100."[20] Skewed quotas would continue into the 1930s.

Relations between Japan and the U.S. deteriorated on December 7, 1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.[21] Fear grew in the White House, and Executive Order 9066 was enacted in 1942.[22] This order removed more than 100,000 Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans from their homes and relocated them to internment

[18] "Topics of the Times," *Swanton News*, November 26, 1898, 4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/769545385/.
[19] Michael Patrick Cullinane, "The 'Gentlemen's' Agreement – Exclusion by Class," *Immigrants & Minorities* 32, no. 2 (May 4, 2014): 148, https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.2013.860688.
[20] Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1, 1999): 74, https://doi.org/10.2307/2567407.
[21] Japan had signed the Tripartite Pact along with Germany and Italy on September 27, 1940, thus establishing an alliance called the Axis powers.
[22] Roger Daniels, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The War Years, 1939-1945* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 75.

camps.[23] Hawaii was placed under martial law, and although some of the Japanese living in the Hawaiian territory were not removed from their homes, their movement on the island was limited. [24] Due to these reasons, Japanese immigrants could not establish lives in the continental United States until after World War II; in Hawaii, however, an established community thrived before and after the war. Consequently, sushi experienced a boom in popularity earlier in Hawaii than it did in the continental United States.

Historiography

The topic of sushi's introduction to the United States is one that has been under-researched. The first scholarly mention of sushi in the U.S. did not appear until 1994's *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time* by anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney. However, this account does not address the history of sushi in America; instead it alludes to its popularity in the 1990s via vignettes, such as sushi-making robots and conveyer belt sushi.[25] The first significant contribution to the academic literature regarding sushi as a cuisine in the United States was in 2000, when anthropologist Theodore C. Bestor detailed the global effort that is undertaken to get sushi onto tables across the world in his foundational article "How Sushi Went Global." In the article, Bestor explicates the many steps in the process, from fishing tuna off the coast of

[23] Donna K. Nagata, Jacqueline H. J. Kim, and Kaidi Wu, "The Japanese American Wartime Incarceration: Examining the Scope of Racial Trauma," *The American Psychologist* 74, no. 1 (January 2019): 36, https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000303.
[24] Eleanor C. Nordyke and Y. Scott Matsumoto, "Japanese in Hawaii: A Historical and Demographic Perspective," *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 11 (1977): 166, https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/communities/df3d690c-1e59-46ca-8e82-864be0443b39; Gail Y. Okawa, *Remembering Our Grandfathers' Exile: US Imprisonment of Hawaii's Japanese in World War II* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2020), 1, 2.
[25] Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 27.

Massachusetts to farming tuna off the coast of Spain, with the catch ultimately arriving at the center of the sushi world: the Tsukiji Fish Market.[26] Bestor then ventures into the past, arguing that "little mention of Japanese food appeared in U.S. media until well after World War II."[27] He states that it was not until the 1960s that lifestyle magazines like *Holiday* and *Sunset* began to feature articles about Japanese food. However, he adds, "The recipes they suggested were canapes like cooked shrimp on caraway rye bread, rather than raw fish on rice."[28] Bestor was correct in that there was an increase in recipes in the continental United States during the 1960s, but there had been recipes for sushi that used raw fish, vegetables and egg as ingredients well before the 1960s. Bestor also does not investigate the popularity of sushi before the 1960s in the U.S. territory of Hawaii.

Bestor continued his research into the global effort of sushi in "Supply-Side Sushi: Commodity, Market, and the Global City." In this article, his focus was still on the worldwide effort of the "middlemen" of the global bluefin tuna industry—American, Canadian, Korean, Spanish, and Japanese buyers at the fish market's center of the sushi world, Tsukiji. Bestor detailed the global process through which fish are caught in Cape Cod; sold and parceled in Japan; and scattered worldwide to consumers, all within two or three days. Bestor also touched on transportation, noting that sushi did not reach global heights until the advent of refrigeration:

> In the last decade of the twentieth century, [there was] a variety of technological advances including highly efficient refrigeration and freezing technologies, the advent of the global jet, and air cargo service...highly efficient commercial refrigeration, high-speed trucking,

[26] Theodore C. Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global," *Foreign Policy*, no. 121 (2000): 60–62, https://doi.org/10.2307/1149619.
[27] Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global," 56.
[28] Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global," 56.

> and airfreight have aided the globalization of sushi and paved the way for sushi's popularity to grow.[29]

Moreover, while Bestor contributed valuable information about sushi to academic literature, he did not delve into the history of its introduction in the U.S.

Bestor's ideas were expanded upon by historian Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, author of *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power, and National Identity*. Cwiertka agreed with Bestor's assertion that sushi started to be more present in the 1960s by presenting statistics; for example, there were 15 Japanese restaurants in California in 1965, 88 restaurants by 1975, and an impressive 173 in 1980.[30] Cwiertka brought up a topic that Bestor also touched on: the significance of sushi being served at the Harvard Club. They both attest that this event occurred in 1972, and Cwiertka stated that "the birth of sushi as a sign of class and educational standing was signified by the opening of a sushi bar in the elite sanctum of New York's Harvard Club."[31] Cwiertka referenced Bestor once more on what she called the "second wave of sushi" in the 1990s by using his statement that sushi would become available to everyday people by providing sushi in supermarkets.

Jordan Sand added to the literature in 2015 with "How Tokyo Invented Sushi," a chapter from this book *Food and the City: Histories of Culture and Cultivation.* In this chapter, Sand provided the history of nigirizushi, including descriptions of how sushi was traditionally transported using fermentation and its origins as a street food sold from carts

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[29] Theodore C. Bestor, "Supply-Side Sushi: Commodity, Market, and the Global City," *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 1 (2001): 76–95, https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2001.103.1.76.
[30] Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power, and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2006), 182.
[31] Cwiertka, 182. (Bestor had stated that Sushi at the Harvard Club was served in 1972 referring to the *New York Times*. Cwiertka would follow Bestor's lead, but with further research the *New York Times* article that both are referring to is from 1981. Jack Rosenthal, "Sushi at the Harvard Club," *New York Times*, November 2, 1981, sec. Opinion, https://www.nytimes.com/1981/11/02/opinion/the-editorial-notebook-sushi-at-the-harvard-club.html.)

across Japan. Sand's research stated that the nigirizushi we know today is no longer comprised of fermented fish, as fresh ingredients were incorporated as soon as they became readily available. Sand's primary focus spanned from the Tokugawa Era in Japan to the 1970s, and he also recounted the significant efforts made in more recent history to reduce pollution in Tokyo Bay. He described how the emphasis on cleaner practices directly affected the fishing industry and increased the availability of tuna used for sushi. Although Sand did not focus on the observed change of sushi over time in the United States, his research shows that the growing popularity of tuna as the main sushi staple has had a global effect on the cuisine's popularity.[32]

In 2017, Andrew McKevitt detailed the marketing techniques used to attract American consumers in his book *Consuming Japan: Popular Culture and the Globalizing of 1980s America.* He deconstructed sushi's transformation from an elite meal to a staple on grocery store counters. McKevitt believed that the hybrid American/Japanese versions of sushi—for example, the California Roll—made Americans willing to take a chance on a foreign dish. Moreover, McKevitt's findings indicate that sushi was not accepted in the United States until it was converted into something Americans were comfortable with and willing to eat.[33]

In *Chop Suey and Sushi from Sea to Shining Sea: Chinese and Japanese Restaurants in the United States,* Bruce Makoto Arnold dedicated a chapter to the story of the first Japanese restaurant in Tucson, Arizona, Tokyo Sukiyaki. He highlighted how

[32] Jordan Sand, "How Tokyo Invented Sushi," in *Food and the City: Histories of Culture and Cultivation*, ed. Dorothee Imbert (Cambridge: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015), 242–43.
[33] Andrew C. McKevitt, *Consuming Japan: Popular Culture and the Globalizing of 1980s America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

owners Sue and Homer Tilton insisted on keeping the restaurant authentic by hiring only people of Japanese descent until this was no longer possible. Arnold also analyzed the popularity of Tokyo Sukiyaki and the trials the owners endured to please American palates while keeping the menu true to Japanese cuisine.[34] Finally, the most recent addition to the secondary literature is *Oishii: The History of Sushi* by Eric Rath. In this book, Rath focused on the change sushi has undergone from its conception in Japan to the modern California Roll. In addition to reporting that by 2003, "every state in America had a Japanese restaurant," he also pointed out how sushi has fused with popular American foods, including pizza, bagels, and burgers. [35] Rath did mention sushi in Los Angeles before the 1960s but did not mention Hawaii and how sushi was not only accepted into American cuisine but was also increasingly popular prior to 1960.

Moreover, while scholars in the field of the history of Japanese food have added beneficial information to the body of literature surrounding sushi and its migration to the United States, some areas necessitate a closer look. For example, the literature lacks an accurate and detailed analysis of when sushi appeared in the United States media. Furthermore, the literature lacks a narrative that tracks the American public's changing attitudes, palates, and perspectives as sushi quietly ascended the ranks of American cuisine to become one of the nation's most popular foods. In addition, sushi's cultural value, or "culinary capital" as introduced by authors Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco, evolved, and flourished throughout the decades from its beginnings at an

[34] Bruce Makoto Arnold, "The Problem with Persistence: The Rise of Tucson's Japanese Cuisine and the Fall of Its Nikkei Community," in *Chop Suey and Sushi from Sea to Shining Sea: Chinese and Japanese Restaurants in the United States*, ed. Tanfer Emin Tunç and Raymond Douglas Chong (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018), 165–89.
[35] Rath, *Oishii*, 82.

upscale social gathering in 1904, to its emergence as carnival fare alongside hotdogs and hamburgers, to its availability to virtually everyone at their local grocery store. The culinary capital of sushi defied socioeconomic status and blended into American culture. This increase in culinary capital provided a palette for Japanese culture to be assimilated into American culture and cuisine. It not only became a high brow experience for a select group of Americans willing to experience this cuisine but was also integrated into supermarkets, extending its capital to tables around the country.[36]

This thesis investigates these changes in sushi's culinary capital and sheds light on other fundamentally overlooked topics that describe sushi's complex place in U.S. history. Key to filling out the story of sushi in the U.S. is an in-depth, exhaustive review of primary documents relating to sushi that appeared in print in the U.S. The sources referenced and consulted for this thesis are the following: newspaper archives from *Newspapers.com* and the American-published Japanese newspaper *Rafu Shimpo;* digitized books sourced online from *Food and Drink History* and *Internet Archive*; and cookery books from the 1950s and 1960s. Although I conducted an exhaustive online search of the available references for this thesis, I am aware that more periodicals and books may have been published but are not yet digitized. Furthermore, other books and periodicals may not have survived over the decades.[37] As I will show below, sources mention sushi in America as early as 1893, which is many decades before scholars

[36] Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco, *Culinary Capital* (New York: Berg Publishers, 2012), 9,10; Nancy K. Stalker, "Introduction: Japanese Culinary Capital," in *Devouring Japan: Global Perspective on Japanese Culinary Identity*, ed. Nancy K. Stalker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 5,6.
[37] "Historical Newspapers from 1700s-2000s," Newspapers.com, 2022, https://www.newspapers.com/; "Rafu Shimpo Los Angeles Japanese Daily News," Rafu Shimpo, July 24, 2023, http://rafu.com/; Adam Matthew Digital, "Food and Drink," 2023, https://www-foodanddrink-amdigital-co-uk.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/; "Internet Archive: Digital Library of Free & Borrowable Books, Movies, Music & Wayback Machine," 2023, https://archive.org/.

contend that sushi came to the U.S. Finally, for the purposes of this thesis, I limited my analysis to the period from when sushi first appeared in the U.S. in 1893 to the 1960s, which is when scholars contend that sushi "officially" joined American mainstream food.

My research found that, contrary to widespread assumption, sushi had a significant foothold in the United States before the 1960s, specifically in Hawaii. While Hawaii may be separated geographically from the mainland, this does not negate that sushi made its way to the U.S. decades before academics in the field claim it did. The widespread appearance of sushi in early 1900s Hawaiian publications suggest an extensive history of the cuisine in Hawaii, beginning shortly after sugarcane plantation owners in Hawaii recruited workers to populate its cane and pineapple fields. Such history notwithstanding, there are a variety of claims to ownership of the "sushi boom" in the U.S., most notably by Noritoshi Kanai, President of Mutual Trading; Harry Wolf, Jr., consultant to Mutual Trading; and Nakashima Tokijiro, owner of Kawafuku restaurant in Los Angeles, where the first sushi bar is claimed to have started.[38] Contrary to these claims, I argue that sushi was a part of the United States before the 1960s, long before it became visible to the general public.

[38] Naomichi Ishige, *Japanese Restaurants in Los Angeles* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1985), 202; Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power, and National Identity*, 182; Nick Tosches, "If You Knew Sushi," *Vanity Fair*, May 28, 2007, https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2007/06/sushi200706; Rath, *Oishii*, 77; Daniel Miller, "This Little Tokyo Restaurant Is Long Gone. But It Changed L.A.'s Food Scene Forever," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 2023, Webpage edition, sec. Business, https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2023-05-03/la-sushi-history-began-at-little-tokyo-restaurant; Daniel Miller, "How Two Friends Sparked L.A.'s Sushi Obsession—and Changed the Way America Eats," *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 2023, sec. Business, A10, A11, https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2023-05-03/history-of-sushi-in-la.

Chapter I.

1899-1914

A craze for all things Japanese, such as art and clothing, had taken place in the 19th century and continued through the following decades.[39] A term coined by French art critic Philippe Burty to explain this boom was Japonisme.[40] This term lent itself to the continued enthusiasm of Westerners' interest in all things Japanese, such as Japanese themed parties where foods including sushi were served. Sushi started its slow ascent into American media from little to no description of this Asian cuisine to the publication of recipes for the American public to try to recreate in their own homes.

The first-time sushi appeared in print in the U.S. was on March 12, 1899, when the *Los Angeles Times* published a short story entitled "The Oni of Jigetsu." The short story was credited to an anonymous Japanese contributor. The story mentioned sushi in this context: "Bento-bako–lacquered boxes were filled with many kinds of fish, of vegetables, of sushi."[41] There was no description of sushi, just an utterance of the word. This vague introduction of the cuisine to America created a definition that was open to interpretation. A few years later, sushi was mentioned in the *Los Angeles Herald.* The story centered around a Japanese luncheon held by Miss Fern Higgins on August 18, 1904. The small article is easy to miss on the page, but it clearly reported that "a new

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[39] *JapanAmerica: Points of Contact 1876-1970* (Ithaca, New York: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, 2016), 26, 44.
[40] Christopher Bush, "Flowers, Houses, People: Unfolding Proust's Japonismes," *L'Esprit Créateur* 62, no. 3 (2022): 82.
[41] "The Oni of Jigetsu. How He Brought Salvation to the Villagers.," *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1899, 32, https://www.newspapers.com/image/380069876/.

dish, Japanese sushi, was the principal feature of the repast."[42] Once again, sushi was mentioned, but no further description was provided for the reader. The only people who knew the type of sushi served were those in attendance at Miss Higgins' home, so there is no way to know who made it or what ingredients were used.

The descriptions of sushi in the media continued to vary wildly from this point forward. The first actual recipe printed for sushi in the United States appeared in December of 1904 in the magazine *Cooking Club,* published in Goshen, IN. The magazine's slogan was, "By everyday cooks for cooks who cook every day. The only culinary publication adapted to use of families with limited income."[43] A recipe for sushi appeared in the section titled "Excellent Rice Methods." The recipe was simple: "Cook a cupful of rice. When it has boiled for ten minutes, add two salt fish, cook till done; then cover with a mayonnaise dressing and serve."[44] Another vague description of sushi was printed on March 15, 1905, in Buffalo, N.Y.'s *Buffalo Commercial*. The article addressed the many uses of seaweed: "A common seaweed food article in all parts of Japan takes the place of a sandwich in America and is called sushi." The article described sushi: "On a sheet of amanori, boiled rice is spread, and on the rice, strips of meat or fish are placed; the whole is then made into a roll and cut into transverse slices."[45] A commonality between these two examples is how sushi recipes began to appear in media that anyone could access, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

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[42] "Annual Picnic on for Today," *Los Angeles Herald*, August 18, 1904, Morning edition, 9, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=LAH19040818&e=-------en--20-LAH-1--txt-txIN-sushi+august+1904-------.
[43] Juliet Hite Gallaher, "Excellent Rice Methods," *Cooking Club*, December 1904, 529, https://www-foodanddrink-amdigital-co-uk.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/Documents/Images/UMICH_JBLCA_PE_39015094349779/0.
[44] Gallaher, Excellent Rice Methods 529,555.
[45] "The Seaweed Crop," *Buffalo Commercial*, March 15, 1905, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/278979300/.

Sushi continued to appear in the media throughout the 1900s, often in conjunction with Japanese-themed parties. On May 12th, 1906, the *Buffalo Evening News* printed a recipe about how to make sushi in a column entitled "Novel Entertainments" by author Ellye Howell Glover (writing under the pseudonym "Madame Merri"). The column listed ideas for throwing a Japanese-themed party, wherein guests would wear kimonos. The recipe Glover provided for sushi used preserved ginger as one of the ingredients, instructing that "sushi is made by boiling a half cup of rice with two tablespoons of chopped preserved ginger."[46] The recipe continued, "When cold, mold into cakes about two inches long and one inch wide." And then finally, "Cut up half a pound of any kind of fish into narrow strips, boil, then add a small bottle of sho-yu… cool the fish and serve a strip on top." Following this recipe was one for kuri-kinto, which is a mixture of chestnuts and sweet potatoes.[47] A year later, a book by Glover entitled *Dame Curtsey's Book of Novel Entertainments for Every Day in the Year* was published with the same recipes for sushi and kuri-kinto. The book included detailed photos of the kimonos, which were suggested to be worn during the Japanese party.[48] The importance of the sushi/kuri-kinto connection is that in the following decades, these two recipes were copied, uncredited to Glover, and used in the same way with information on a party and how to make both recipes in the exact order they appeared in 1906 and 1907. Moreover, sushi at this point had become synonymous with Japanese food and culture for Americans, with Japonisme continuing to flourish during this time. Liora Gvion and

[46] Ellye Howell Glover, "Novel Entertainments," *Buffalo Evening News*, May 22, 1906, 17, https://www.newspapers.com/image/329118238/.
[47] Glover, "Novel Entertainments," 17.
[48] Ellye Howell Glover, *"Dame Curtsey's" Book of Novel Entertainments for Every Day in the Year* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1907), 200–203; "Ellye Howell Glover," Database of Canadian Early Women Writers, 2021, https://dhil.lib.sfu.ca/doceww/person/1729.

Naomi Trostler stated in *The Journal of Popular Culture* that "Cuisines are regarded for the most part as combinations of ingredients, dishes, cooking methods, and styles of eating associated with a national territory and its citizens. Just as sushi implies Japanese, pasta and tomato sauce topped with Parmesan cheese connotes Italian."[49] In other words, sushi was quickly becoming an unofficial representative of Japan for many Americans.

The Japanese experience in America went far beyond cuisine, as political forces during this time shaped the makeup of the country. The Gentlemen's Agreement went into effect in 1908, effectively stopping further emigration of laborers from Japan to the United States and U.S. territories.[50] The Issei already living in Hawaii went on strike against the sugar cane plantation owners for equal wages from May through August of 1909. At the time, an Issei was paid $18 monthly, while Puerto Rican and Portuguese immigrants received $22.50. The living conditions were also different for the Issei than the other two groups: "The Japanese were given pigsty-like homes…while Portuguese and Puerto Rican labors doing the same work lived in family cottages."[51] By this time, the Issei comprised 60 percent of the workforce on the plantations, and the plantation owners knew that the fields would not get cultivated without them. The Issei triumphed when the plantation owners agreed to raise salaries, putting the Issei in a position to build a life in Hawaii alongside Hawaiian natives, Americans, and other cultures on the islands. This contrasted greatly with the Japanese experience in the continental U.S.

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[49] Liora Gvion and Naomi Trostler, "From Spaghetti and Meatballs through Hawaiian Pizza to Sushi: The Changing Nature of Ethnicity in American Restaurants," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 41, no. 6 (2008): 950–74, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2008.00559.x.
[50] Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty: An American History*, Seagull Fifth edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 761.
[51] Okihiro, *Cane Fires*, 46, 56.

The acceptance of the Japanese in Hawaii became evident in 1914, when sushi first appeared in Hawaiian newspapers. At this time, the census reported that 79,675 Japanese lived in Hawaii.[52] This cultural presence was made known when the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* printed an article on sushi entitled "A Japanese Dinner." Like the articles written by Glover, this article listed a theme for a gathering:

> The first thing to be done is to go to or send to a warehouse which carries Japanese goods and buy the articles intended to give the room its atmosphere…The invitations should be written on rice paper, and if the guests desired to come in Japanese customs–which will add much to the scene's beauty– it should be specially stated on the invitation.[53]

This description exemplifies the public's positive perception of Japonisme during this time. The article also provided a recipe for making nigiri sushi, although it was not called by that name; it was just called sushi: "Sushi is composed of a cake made of boiled rice and preserved ginger and served with a strip of fish upon the top of it."[54] This article illustrates that while Japanese cuisine was becoming part of the culture in Hawaii, it was still subject to varying definitions.

Sushi also gained notoriety in 1914, when T. Philip Terry published a guidebook for travelers entitled *Terry's Japanese Empire, including Korea and Formosa, with Chapters on Manchuria, the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the Chief Ocean Routes to Japan: A Guidebook for Travelers.* In this book, Terry defined sushi as "a general name for food of boiled rice and fish, eggs, vegetables, etc. seasoned with vinegar and soy. As an affix, the form is changed into zushi." Terry then listed the numerous forms of sushi:

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[52] Eleanor C. Nordyke and Y. Scott Matsumoto, "Japanese in Hawaii: A Historical and Demographic Perspective," *Hawaiian Journal of History*, 1977, 165, https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/communities/df3d690c-1e59-46ca-8e82-864be0443b39.
[53] "A Japanese Dinner," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 7, 1914, 17, https://www.newspapers.com/image/876840375/.
[54] "A Japanese Dinner," 17.

chirahi-zushi, hako-zushi, inari-zushi, maki-zushi, nigiri-zushi, funa-zushi, and kombu-zushi. Terry also described how sushi was sold in Yamakita, Kanagawa, by sourcing the fish from the Sakawa River: "A product of this stream, in the shape of a smaller silvery trout seasoned with vinegar, cooked with rice, and called sushi, is sold at this and other stations."[55] Terry's guidebook provided readers with novel information on several types of sushi and a brief description of ingredients.

Just as quickly as media coverage of sushi increased from 1899 through 1914, so did it disappear during the second half of the decade. In fact, there would be no more reports of sushi in the U.S. media until the 1920s. This coincides with major world events that dominated the lives of Americans and Japanese alike and filled the newspapers with stories that could be considered more relevant than dinner parties and school luncheons. This event was World War I, which from 1914-1918 shifted the focus from peacetime news and exposés to reports on bombing campaigns and casualties.[56] However, post-World War I, sushi re-emerged in American culture.

[55] Terry, *Terry's Japanese Empire, Including Korea, and Formosa, with Chapters on Manchuria, the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the Chief Ocean Routes to Japan; A Guidebook for Travelers*, 1914, xlvi, 368.
[56] Jay Winter, ed., *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume 1: Global War*, vol. 1, The Cambridge History of the First World War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 11.

Chapter II.

1920-1929

During the 1920s, the mentions of sushi in U.S. media continued to be vague concerning ingredients and preparation. The 1920s also saw sushi's expansion into many facets of society, including school functions and weddings. This greatly increased U.S. citizens' awareness and access to sushi. While sushi made appearances in media from the continental U.S., most articles on sushi in the 1920s came from Hawaii. This continuing predominance of sushi-related articles in the U.S. territory suggests that sushi in the 1920s was thriving in Hawaii, where the Japanese had been more readily accepted into society.

There was just one mention of sushi in the early 1920s, but by the end of the 1920s Americans were being exposed to sushi in greater numbers and readers were given a description on how to construct sushi. For example, in 1922, an article from the *Honolulu Advertiser* described sushi as "rolls of rice filled with mushrooms and other vegetables."[57] Americans' exposure to sushi was increasing with events held at grade schools, such as luncheons and carnivals. The first mention in the continental United States of sushi was in the *Rafu Shimpo* on May 30, 1926. The article "Japanese and American in Happy Meet" reported on a luncheon held at the East San Pedro Grammar School in California. The school invited 300 Japanese visitors and 130 home teachers to

[57] "Japanese Uses for Seaweed," *Honolulu Advertiser*, October 12, 1922, 12, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259347632/.

the luncheon, where "sushi and sandwiches were served by 16 schoolchildren clad in Japanese kimonos."[58] This is a drastic increase in exposure of sushi to the American public and contrasts greatly with events earlier in the century that were held for just a handful of people. Further confirming the rise of sushi were two articles from 1927 printed in Honolulu, Hawaii, that reported on sushi being served at school carnivals. On March 6, 1927, the *Honolulu Advertiser* reported on a carnival that featured each nation represented by food—naturally, Japan was represented by sushi.[59] The other article, printed on May 21, 1927, described the scene: "The Japanese booth was decorated with cherry blossoms…they wore charming kimonos… salted peanuts and sushi were sold."[60]

On July 18 and 25, 1927, the *Rafu Shimpo* ran a two-part article on an author's experience with sushi in Japan. The author called sushi a "sandwich" and a "jelly roll" and went into detail about how the owner of the shop would make and sell out of sushi daily: "Tokyo students practicing for their regattas were patrons of the shop buying out the entire stock of rice sandwiches wrapped in nori."[61] The author continued,

> The manner in which the proprietor rolled the nori used in folding up ingredients betrayed that he was a man of long experience. He would spread out the thin layers of rice and relish kampyo or strings of dried melon pulp that had been made tasty by boiling in shoyu. Or it might be that he was engaged after the manner of a jelly roll...As he placed his nori on the table in front of him, added the rice and then arranged such toothsome bits as pounded shrimps, mushrooms, and strips from omelet

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[58] "Japanese and American in Happy Meet," *Rafu Shimpo*, May 30, 1926, 2, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19260530-01.1.10&srpos=10&e=------192-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi---------.

[59] "Girls Reserve Notes," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 6, 1927, 24, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259031978/.

[60] "OLAA School Fair Combines Charms of Island Races," *Honolulu Advertiser*, May 21, 1927, 4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258592890/.

[61] Zoe Kincaid, "Sushi-Ya of Senju Part I," *Rafu Shimpo*, July 18, 1927, 2, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19270718-01.1.5&srpos=1&e=------192-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi-----1927-----; Zoe Kincaid, "Sushi-Ya of Senju Part II," *Rafu Shimpo*, July 25, 1927, 2, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19270725-01.1.5&srpos=2&e=------192-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi----1927-----.

> baked thin. A small mat made of pieces of split bamboo tied together, he would next use to shape and mold the mass to his satisfaction; with a few quick strokes of a sharp knife, the sushi was cut into the required lengths. It was always pleasant to anticipate the o-sushi fresh from the hands of this expert.[62]

This was the first detailed description of how sushi was made, and like others seeing sushi for the first time, the author equated sushi to a sandwich and jelly roll. The description was highly detailed, even including information on how sushi was molded then cut into bite size pieces.

During 1928, sushi continued to appear in everyday life in Hawaii. As in the previous year, the recurring theme of Japan being represented by sushi occurred at an event held by McKinley High School: "There were foods of the different nations. In one corner, among beautiful lanterns and cherry blossoms, was the Japanese food booth where sushi, ocha, and osenbe were served."[63] Also in 1928, sushi was featured at a Japanese wedding in Hawaii among a mix of Hawaiian and Japanese food: "The tables were set in Japanese and Hawaiian style with delicious dishes of kalua pig, sushi, poi, fish, and cakes."[64] According to Historian Rachel Lauden's experiences in Hawaii, food in Hawaii "was culturally local, a cuisine that could only have been created by the specific combination of cultural groups that had settled in Hawaii."[65] The Japanese immigrants had started to do just that by incorporating sushi into the other Hawaiian cuisines already on the islands. The last report on sushi in Hawaii in 1929 was from a

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[62] Kincaid, "Sushi-Ya of Senju Part I," *Rafu Shimpo*, 2; Kincaid, "Sushi-Ya of Senju Part II," *Rafu Shimpo*, 2.
[63] "Girls Reserves," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 4, 1928, 22, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258665198/.
[64] "Japanese Wedding Ceremony Is Held," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, August 14, 1928, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/274903335/.
[65] Rachel Laudan, "Homegrown Cuisines or Naturalized Cuisines? The History of Food in Hawaii and Hawaii's Place in Food History," *Food, Culture & Society* 19, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 438, https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2016.1208334.

function wherein attendees brought food from their homes. Among the foods listed were sushi, mochi, and rice cakes.[66] Clearly, by the end of the 1920s, Americans, particularly those in Hawaii, had embraced sushi, making it the unofficial culinary avatar of Japan as a nation. This would continue in the decades ahead.

[66] "Kona Izumo Temple Holds Celebration," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 25, 1929, 4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258867036/.

Chapter III.

1930s

An examination of the newspaper archives illustrates that sushi's popularity grew steadily in Hawaii during the 1930s, and by decade's end, sushi was ingrained in Hawaiian culture. Only a handful of articles from this decade originated from the continental U.S., suggesting that sushi was not receiving the kind of attention on the mainland as it was in Hawaii. This can likely be attributed to the immigration restrictions imposed on the Japanese that began with 1908's Gentlemen's Agreement and included other policies implemented over the subsequent decades.

Because of limited immigration to the continental U.S., the population of Nisei (first generation Japanese Americans) in Hawaii grew in the 1920s and 1930s but not on the mainland. In the 1920s, Nisei comprised 2.5% of the population of Hawaii; by the 1930s, Nisei represented 13%.[67] The Nisei did not fall under the law that prevented their parents, the Issei, from buying property in the United States and its territories, and because of this, sushi restaurants were starting to open.[68] It had been half a century since the first Japanese immigrant arrived in Hawaii, and over that time, sushi grew to become a mainstay in Hawaiian cultural activities.[69] Sushi was mentioned often in articles in the 1930s, appearing at fundraising events and birthday parties, and eventually being served

[67] Nordyke and Matsumoto, "Japanese in Hawaii," 1977, 166.
[68] Brent M. S. Campney, "Anti-Japanese Sentiment, International Diplomacy, and the Texas Alien Land Law of 1921," *Journal of Southern History* 85, no. 4 (2019): 845, https://doi.org/10.1353/soh.2019.0245.
[69] "Japanese Sponsor Luau," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, February 24, 1935, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555648589/.

alongside everyday American standards such as hamburgers, hot dogs, ice cream, and cake.[70]

There were 27 newspaper articles from Hawaii in the 1930s that featured sushi compared to just seven from the 1920s. The first report of sushi from Hawaii in this decade was on February 21, 1931, and was printed in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin.* The article stated that sushi was being served at a ceremony for Mrs. Hideko Koide, who was celebrating her 33rd birthday.[71] The article mentioned that at 3 p.m., refreshment booths opened and were serving sushi along with ice cream, soda water, salad, oden, noodles, and fruit.[72] Just as sushi played a main role in birthday celebrations like Mrs. Koide's, it also played a major role in fundraisers in Hawaii. In Hawaii during this time the Girl Scouts turned to a popular item to help raise funds: sushi. In the first fundraiser highlighted in the press, the Girl Scouts Baking Club raised $4 to send a delegate from Maui to Honolulu. Today that translates to nearly $77.[73]

Notably, a recipe that had appeared in previous decades reappeared in Monrovia, CA, in 1931. The author, known only to the reader as Mrs. Chase, stated, "From the number of questions in regard to entertaining motifs coming to my desk, I am quite sure

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[70] "Luau Given by Terminal Co.," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, January 2, 1939, 2, https://www.newspapers.com/image/276091751/; Joe Katsunuma, "Kahuku Will Hold 7th Fair Friday, Saturday," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 12, 1939, 10, https://www.newspapers.com/image/275689504/; "Food Sale Sponsored by the Teachers and Officers of the Keaukaha School P.T.A.," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, September 29, 1938, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555543956/; "Birthdays Are Celebrated," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, October 2, 1938, 13, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555544723/; "Big Luau Is Given at Waiahole School," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 4, 1932, 33, https://www.newspapers.com/image/274965297/; "Class Plans to Give Novel Party," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 14, 1936, 30, https://www.newspapers.com/image/274969006/.

[71] "Ceremony of Exorcism to Be Given Tomorrow," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, February 21, 1931, 1, https://www.newspapers.com/image/274911902/.

[72] "Ceremony of Exorcism to Be Given Tomorrow," 1.

[73] "News From Maui," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 21, 1931, 29, https://www.newspapers.com/image/274913585/; AIER, "Cost of Living Calculator: What Is Your Dollar Worth Today? | AIER," 2021, https://www.aier.org/cost-of-living-calculator/.

the Japanese parties are as popular as ever." [74] Mrs. Chase also presented the reader with a similar theme from the decades past: wearing kimonos to Japanese-themed parties. Furthermore, the recipes Mrs. Chase listed in the article were exact copies of recipes once published in 1907 by Ellye Howell Glover in her book *Dame Curtsey's" Book of Novel Entertainments for Every Day in the Year*. Chase used the same recipe for sushi that Glover printed, and Chase also printed the exact kuri-kinto recipe that followed, all without mention of the original author. Ethics aside, this shows that Chase considered the original recipe published by Glover to be a suitable example of how to make sushi. [75]

Another article on sushi in the continental U.S. appeared in both Tennessee and Illinois on the topic of the many uses of seaweed. Both articles called sushi a Japanese sandwich and described maki sushi, which is the most recognizable type of sushi roll to people, in the following way: "Sushi, a popular Japanese sandwich, consists of a slab of amanori on which is placed boiled rice and strips of meat. Then the sushi is rolled like a jelly roll and cut into transverse slices."[76] Although sushi is not a sandwich, invoking images that a reader would know, like a sandwich and jelly roll, could be helpful for someone who is unfamiliar with sushi to visualize it.

The popularity of sushi in the 1930s manifested with the appearance of sushi restaurants both in Hawaii and on the mainland. The first advertisement for a restaurant in Hawaii that sold sushi appeared on January 8, 1932, in the city of Hilo. The restaurant was called Mitsuwa Chicken Hekka, and its advertisement listed sukiyaki, noodles, and

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[74] Mrs. Chase, "Home Economics," *Monrovia News*, April 21, 1931, sec. Women's Interests, 4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/606499721/.
[75] Glover, *Dame Curtsey's*, 200–202.
[76] "Seaweed Makes Sandwiches, Packs Fish, Blends Cosmetics," *Belleville News-Democrat*, December 1, 1931, 14, https://www.newspapers.com/image/769143958/; "Uses for Seaweed," *Knoxville Journal*, December 26, 1931, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/586421278/.

sushi.[77] On June 8, 1932, another restaurant, also in Hilo, advertised sushi. The restaurant, I. Ogi, served egg noodles, plain noodles, rice cakes, and sushi.[78] Sushi restaurants popped up in the continental U.S. as well. An established sushi restaurant in Los Angeles reported on moving its location in the *Rafu Shimpo* on October 6, 1933. The article stated that Matsuno-sushi (Matsu No Zushi) was moving locations to the Kawasaki building; it also reported that Matsuno-sushi would cater to both "Japanese and a few American sushi-eaters."[79] The mentioning in the article of both Japanese and American clientele highlights that sushi was also eaten by Americans at this time. This brief mention further illustrates that sushi was becoming integrated into some Americans' diets and was not just a common element of Japanese consumers' cuisine.

Japanese food had become so popular in Hawaii in the 1930s that both the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of Hawaii raised funds to study it. The outcome of their collaboration was a book written by Professor Casey D. Miller entitled *Japanese Foods Commonly Used in Hawaii.* The book included two recipes on sushi—Inari-sushi and Maki sushi—and listed instructions on how to make vinegar sauce for the rice. This was the first time that a full description of how to make two types of sushi appeared in print:

> Inari-sushi –Ingredients: rice, water, salt, string beans, gobo, flaked bonito, sugar, carrots, mushrooms, shoyu, and vinegar sauce. Maki-sushi –

[77] "Mitsuwa Chicken Hekka," *Honolulu Advertiser*, January 8, 1932, 20, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258709366/.
[78] "I. Ogi," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, June 8, 1932, 2, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555626144/.
[79] "Sushi House in New Location," *Rafu Shimpo*, October 6, 1933, 6, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19331006-01.1.6&srpos=6&e=------193-en-25-trs-1--img-txIN-sushi---------.

> Ingredients: Rice, water, salt, watercress, flaked bonito, sugar, kampyo, egg, shoyu, kamaboko, nori, gobo, and roast eel.[80]

The following year, an article entitled "Japanese Dishes Intrigue Host of Tourists" was published about tourists visiting the Hawaiian Islands. In it, the writer stated that there was an "endless variety of Japanese dishes featured on the menus of teahouses where dinners are constantly served."[81] The article also referenced Miller's book and mentioned the sushi recipes from the book, along with other Japanese dishes. The article reported that for tourists, Japanese food was bizarre at first: "Strange, indeed, are the many Japanese foods to those who taste them for the first time."[82] Moreover, by the mid-1930s, sushi had become the picture, symbol, and avatar of what a person in America considered "Japanese food."

The year 1935 featured two notable articles in Hawaiian media about sushi. The first was set at the Kona Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration, which was held in honor of the first Japanese immigrants to Hawaii. The article stated that "ice cream, sushi, peanuts, cold drinks, hot dogs, sandwiches, hamburgers, and puffed rice candies" were served.[83] The second article reported on a school event, but this time not at a carnival or festival; rather, it was in the canteen run by the seniors at the Kamehameha School for Girls. Interestingly, they served a menu nearly identical to the menu at the Kona Fiftieth Celebration: "Some of the things sold in the canteen are sushi, soda pop, hamburgers,

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[80] Casey D. Miller, *Japanese Foods Commonly Used in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, United States Department of Agriculture, 1933), 36–38, https://www-foodanddrink-amdigital-co-uk.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/Documents/SearchDetails/ucsd_TX7245J3M5551933.
[81] Lorin Tarr Gill, "Japan Dishes Intrigue Host of Tourists," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 30, 1934, 10, https://www.newspapers.com/image/274986035/.
[82] Tarr Gill, "Japan Dishes Intrigue Host of Tourists," 10.
[83] "Japanese Sponsor Luau," *Honolulu Star*-Bulletin, April 27, 1935, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555648589/.

potato salad, pies, cream cake, mea ona pua, long john, and cakes."[84] Sushi in the previous decade was served alongside Hawaiian food, but now it was being served along with food that was common at American cookouts, fast food restaurants, and carnivals. One reason sushi became successful at these events was that sushi did not always have to be complex with many ingredients. It could be simple with few ingredients, making it easy to prepare quickly and serve fast, just like hot dogs and hamburgers.

Sushi made a place for itself at the American table, and in 1936, the Japanese creation faced off against hot dogs at a carnival sponsored by the Japanese Girl Reserve group of the YMCA. The *Los Angeles Times* stated that "O-sushi, rice wrapped in seaweed and one of the most popular dishes in Japan, was chosen for the carnival because it is so easy to serve. Eaten cold and merely sliced off a long roll, o-sushi is ideal for outdoor events."[85] The *Los Angeles Times* also stated that the choice of which was better, sushi or hot dogs, was left up to the crowd that attended.[86] Hot dogs, although originating in Germany, had become synonymous with American culture by this time.[87] This event, therefore, could be conceived as a contest between American and Japanese cuisines. The writer mentioned this conjecture in the article "All-American Hot Dogs vs Japanese O-sushi."[88] The article also stated that Japanese and American food would be served. [89]

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[84] "Work for Canteen," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 27, 1935, 14, https://www.newspapers.com/image/275049444/; Leilani Lee, "Kamehameha Girls Write on Matters Of School Interest," *Honolulu Advertiser*, April 29, 1935, 11, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258883067/.
[85] "Table's Set For O-Sushi," *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1936, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/380461691/.
[86] "Table's Set For O-Sushi," 7.
[87] Bruce Kraig, "Man Eats Dogs: The Hot Dog Stands of Chicago," *Gastronomica* 5, no. 1 (February 1, 2005): 57–58, https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2005.5.1.56.
[88] "Table's Set For O-Sushi," 7.
[89] "Table's Set For O-Sushi," 7.

This blend of American and Japanese foods in local cuisine brought smiles to the public during the holiday season. The *Hilo Tribune-Herald* reported on January 2, 1937, that a group of people in the community of Hilo, HI, brought Christmas cheer to the patients at the Puumaile Home. They brought with them sushi, cookies, turkey, roast pig, ice cream, candies, fruit cake, pickles, and Christmas trees.[90] Similarly, in Honokaa, HI, a carnival and dance were planned that featured sushi along with hot dogs, hamburgers, popcorn, pies, cakes, noodles, and chewing gum.[91] Sushi had become a mainstay at the carnival scene in Hawaii.

Not only was sushi growing in popularity in everyday life, but its usefulness as a marketing tool also grew in the 1930s. In Kekaha, HI, the Kekaha Athletic Association raised money for the community Christmas parties at the Cosmopolitan Moonlight Ball, where "Mrs. Peter Muranaka sold 800 sushi cakes…at 5 cents each and added her share to the fund."[92] That's $400 in 1937, which in 2023 translates to $8,480; even if she kept half of the money to cover expenses, that would still amount to $4,240. This was a large sum of money to add to the already successful event.[93] Also sold at the event were "1,000 hot dogs at 5 cents each."[94] Once again, sushi, along with an American standard, the hot dog, were paired together at a fundraiser, showing that both were accepted fare at this time in America.

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[90] Gladys Chun, "Puumaile Patient Writes Thanks for Christmas Cheer," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, January 2, 1937, 3, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555620774/.
[91] "Teachers Are Busy Working on Big Show," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, January 31, 1937, 9, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555625484/.
[92] "Ball at Park Huge Success," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, October 18, 1937, 9, https://www.newspapers.com/image/275031057/.
[93] H Brothers Incorporated, "Calculate the Value of $400 in 1937. How Much Is It Worth Today?" 2023, https://www.dollartimes.com/inflation/inflation.php?amount=400&year=1937.
[94] "Ball at Park Huge Success," 9.

Sushi continued its growth into American cuisine both in the continental U.S. and in Hawaii as the 1930s progressed. In 1937, at the Japanese Union Church Bazaar in Pasadena, CA, sushi was on the menu for lunch and dinner, along with chow mein, noodles, and tea. Booths were also set up to sell ice cream, hot dogs, cookies, and cakes. The proceeds went to fund debt relief for the church.[95] This event was different because sushi was not at a booth; it was a featured item for lunch and dinner. Interestingly, typically American foods like ice cream and hot dogs were relegated to the booths. In 1938, in Los Angeles another church bazaar was held, but this time it had a Hawaiian theme; however, the food served was not all that Hawaiian, as "hot dogs, tamales, sushi, cakes, soda, and ice cream to feed more than 500 people" were available.[96] This was an example of the growing variety of foods already established in Hawaii by this time and the sharing of American, Japanese, and Hispanic foods that served as a microcosm of the cultural cuisine.

While sushi was undoubtedly popular among many people, there were some who remained reluctant to try the new cuisine. The *Honolulu Advertiser* published an article in 1938 highlighting this uneasiness: "Let us warn you that newcomers may require two or three cooling 'somethings' before they will essay sushi."[97] The "cooling something" referred to an alcoholic beverage mentioned in the article. The article also suggested that novices might need a backup food option in case the taste was not to their liking: "Just to

[95] "Pasadena Church To Sponsor Bazaar on Friday, Saturday," *Rafu Shimpo*, November 2, 1937, 6, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19371102-01.1.6&srpos=39&e=------193-en-25-trs-26--img-txIN-sushi---------.
[96] "Hawaiian Music to Feature at M.E. Bazaar Friday Night," *Rafu Shimpo*, May 12, 1938, 8, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19380512-01.1.8&srpos=55&e=------193-en-25-trs-51--img-txIN-sushi---------.
[97] "Combine Local Colors with Ideas," *Honolulu Advertiser*, June 10, 1938, 18, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259002122/.

make sure the newcomers are well fortified until they have learned to eat sushi, have a stack of macadamia nuts about."[98] This highlights the contrast of attitudes toward sushi depending on the consumer; those living in Hawaii ate it readily and donated money in sake of it, while foreigners to Hawaii might need to be drunk to even give it a try.

A notable article that appeared in the continental U.S. took up half a page in the *Rafu Shimpo* and was entitled "Oriental Picnic and Buffet Luncheon Recipes." The article presents a definition of sushi:

> The word sushi means, in Tokyo, pieces of vinegared rice covered with a raw fish or shellfish in various forms, or a seaweed rolls; while the same word in Osaka and west applies to vinegared rice mixed with fine cut pieces of vegetables, fresh and dried, cooked to taste, and sometimes raw fish steeped in vinegar.[99]

The fact that the article took up a half page illustrates sushi's prominence in the community. Moreover, sushi had a strong presence in Hawaii in the 1930s and slowly appeared more in the continental United States. Sushi became part of a blend of cultural standards at local events, where it appeared side by side with mainstays like hot dogs, hamburgers, and later, tacos and tamales, intermingling with foods from other cultures.

[98] "Combine Local Colors with Ideas," 18.
[99] "Oriental Picnic and Buffet Luncheon Recipes," *Rafu Shimpo*, October 15, 1939, 8, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19391015-01.1.14&srpos=1&e=------193-en-25-trs-1--img-txIN-sushi---------.

Chapter IV.

1940s

The 1940s began with a strong showing of sushi in the media, both in Hawaii and on the mainland. However, after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, this dropped off dramatically and remained stagnant for the remainder of World War II. Immediately after the war ended, sushi exploded in the media, and its media representation steadily increased through the end of the decade.

In 1940, sushi was popular among Japanese people in Southern California. The issue was trying to get other cultures to partake in the exotic cuisine. An article published by the newspaper *Rafu Shimpo* and written by Tsuyoshi Matsumoto stressed this point. Japanese restaurant owners were encouraged to make food that the American public would like: "Are we really trying hard enough to make the American public like what we have to sell them? The answer is NO! We have a popular saying: to win a man's heart win through his stomach.' We can certainly apply that policy to our business methods, can't we?"[100] Matsumoto stated that he was not a businessman and had no say in the matter, but from a customer's standpoint, he studied what most Americans liked to eat. Matsumoto was worried that the owners of the Japanese restaurants were missing out on potential customers as he pointed out, "Most of [Little Tokyo] restaurants, no doubt unintentionally, are driving away potential customers simply because they don't know

[100] Tsuyoshi Matsumoto, "Our Li'l Tokio," *Rafu Shimpo*, March 3, 1940, 6, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19400323-01.1.6&srpos=2&e=------194-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi-----1940-----.

what they like to eat and how they like to eat it!"[101] Matsumoto did note that one establishment was making an effort to cater to both Japanese and American clientele by making food the way the customer liked it—what he labeled "Americanization." He credited this to Obasan's Counter in the Iwaki Drug Store on San Pedro and First.[102] Matsumoto also likened strategies of restaurants in Southern California to those in Japan: "[You're] doing exactly the same kind of business as such might be doing in Japan today. They do well with Japanese people, but with the decrease in numbers of the Issei, residents in our city and her vicinity will soon face a serious situation."[103] He then stated that any sushi restaurant that was popular with the Issei should "Americanize their service, they might draw the outsiders, the American customers."[104] Matsumoto clearly understood that Japanese food in Los Angeles was in peril of becoming extinct if menus were not adjusted to the tastes of their customers.

Tsuyoshi Matsumoto had another suggestion for luring non-Japanese diners into sushi restaurants in his community of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles. Since sushi was still an adventuristic food choice in the continental United States at this point, he thought that a simple explanation of what sushi was might attract other cultures to try it. As an example, he pointed out how the restaurant Matsu no Sushi sometimes drew attention:

> If I were to single out a distinctively artistic window in all [Little Tokyo,] I would not hesitate in naming that of Matsu no Sushi…I have seen from time-to-time American passers-by pausing in front of that window to see and admire the exotic beauties displayed by it. I only wish that they

[101] Matsumoto, "Our Li'l Tokio," 6.
[102] Matsumoto, "Our Li'l Tokio," 6.
[103] Matsumoto, "Our Li'l Tokio," 6.
[104] Matsumoto, "Our Li'l Tokio," 6.

> added… a footnote in English… it also makes me think how wonderful it might be if passer-by could stand in front… and see how sushi is made.[105]

To further introduce Americans to Japanese cuisine, there was the introduction of the concept of food as performance, which can be seen today in restaurants such as Benihana, where chefs create meals tableside. As Katarzyna J. Cwiertka illustrated in her book *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power, and National Identity*,

> An important factor that familiarized the American public with the idea of dining 'Japanese style' in a way preparing Americans for the sushi boom was the restaurant chain Benihana… the first *teppanyaki*-style restaurant that opened outside of Japan. *Teppanyaki* literally means 'fried on a steel griddle.' It implies a style of dining that allows the customers, who are seated… to watch meat, shellfish, and vegetables being fried in front of their eyes.[106]

This type of performance cooking helped entice Americans to experience new foods and familiar foods in an environment that was entertaining and educational at the same time.

While sushi was still in its nascent stages at this time in the continental U.S., it had become fully intertwined with the culture in Hawaii. This was highlighted in Honolulu, with nearly a full page of articles about the House of Mitsukoshi, a large department store.[107] A group of Japanese American businessmen built the four-story building, with the project headed up by L.T. Kagawa, who was born in Honolulu. The building occupied 10,115 square feet and sold groceries, kimonos, silk goods, men's,

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[105] Tsuyoshi Matsumoto, "We want Show Windows for Showing," *Rafu Shimpo*, April 2, 1940, 6, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19400402-01.1.6&srpos=1&e=------194-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi----1940-----.

[106] Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power, and National Identity*, 185,186.

[107] Me P. Y. Chong Chong, "Well Wishes from Me P. Y. Chong," *Honolulu Advertiser*, November 4, 1940, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259323708/; "Unique Sound System Used," *Honolulu Advertiser*, November 4, 1940, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259323708/; Associated Contractors, "Our Compliments to the House of Mitsukoshi," *The Honolulu Advertiser*, November 4, 1940, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259323708/; "Aloha House of Mitsukoshi," *Honolulu Advertiser*, November 4, 1940, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259323708/.

women's, and children's apparel, arts, and objects from Japan.[108] On the roof of the garden, there was a dining hall where both American and Japanese cuisine was served, a café, and a special restaurant for Edo-style sushi, which was made from ingredients that could be found in Tokyo Bay.[109]

Ironically, next to this article on the same page was an article about the ban on Japanese luxury goods in Japan.[110] Japan had put a stop to anything that was not essential in order to expand production on essential wartime goods.[111] Oliver K. Yanaga stated in 1940 that the House of Mitsukoshi was ahead of the ban and had stocked up beforehand.[112] At the same time, there were talks in the continental United States for support of banning Japanese goods altogether: "The importation of Japanese merchandise is a direct threat by cheap Japanese labor to the people of the United States and their industries."[113] At this point in history, Hawaii had embraced Japanese culture, including its food and goods, but in the continental United States, some people felt threatened by Japanese culture and products.

However, not all people in the continental United States were against sushi. An article appearing in Ohio entitled "A Japanese Dinner" would suggest that some people in the continental U.S. were willing to embrace Japanese culture: "A Japanese dinner is both

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[108] "History of Leaders Told.," *Honolulu Advertiser*, November 4, 1940, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259323708/; "House of Mitsukoshi Ready for Business This Morning," *Honolulu Advertiser*, November 4, 1940, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259323708/.
[109] "House of Mitsukoshi Ready for Business This Morning," 8; Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 48–50.
[110] "Japan Ban Not Effective Here.," *Honolulu Advertiser*, November 4, 1940, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259324131/.
[111] "Japan to Ban Luxury Goods," *Honolulu Advertiser*, July 6, 1940, 3, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259137756/.
[112] "Japan to Ban Luxury Goods," 3.
[113] A.F. of L. Weekly News Service, "Would Ban Japan's Low - Wage Goods American Federation of Labor Opposes Importation," *Paterson Evening News*, January 27, 1940, 17, https://www.newspapers.com/image/525646143/; "Double-Edge Weapon Against Japan Held by Roosevelt," *Gazette and Daily*, October 4, 1940, 15, https://www.newspapers.com/image/65650050/.

novel and practical. The first thing to be done is to go or send to a warehouse which carries Japanese goods and buy the articles intended to give the table and room its atmosphere."[114] The article included the same recipes for sushi that Glover and Chase had previously printed; naturally, the kinto-kuri recipe was also the same. This article also included a sample menu that was similar to Chase's idea, but this menu did not resemble any of the ones Chase had suggested.[115] This article illustrates that an interest in sushi was growing in the continental United States and that some people were eager to embrace the Japanese culture.

However, interested the citizens of the U.S. were in sushi at this time, politics prevailed when there was a change in relations between Japan and the United States and President Roosevelt froze all assets. Due to this, Japan lost three-fourths of overseas trade. This was due to Japan moving into French-occupied Indo-China. Following the U.S.'s lead, Great Britain also imposed a freeze on all Japanese assets.[116] Following this freeze of assets, President Roosevelt went a step further and limited the type of oil exported to Japan:

> President Roosevelt tonight applied a virtual embargo on exports of all motor fuel and lubricating oils to Japan in what was described as a new blow to the Japanese war. Roosevelt left the door open to continued oil shipments to Japan–enough to keep her non-military industries functioning.[117]

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[114] "A Japanese Dinner," *Hamilton Evening Journal*, January 24, 1941, 11, https://www.newspapers.com/image/16398353/.
[115] "A Japanese Dinner," 11.
[116] "Washington Got Jump on Japan: Assets Frozen by Roosevelt with Full Knowledge of Retaliation," *Plain Speaker*, July 26, 1941, 1, https://www.newspapers.com/image/270564846/.
[117] "New Blow at Nippon's War Machine Seen: Virtual Embargo Put on Exports by F.R. in Brief Statement," *Klamath News*, August 2, 1941, 1, https://www.newspapers.com/image/104053699/.

Some Japanese businesses were not affected immediately; for instance, in Fresno, CA., an advertisement for Matsuno Sushi Café mentioned not only sushi, but also sukiyaki and Chinese Food.[118] This indicates that there was another establishment serving sushi in the continental United States before the 1960s. However, not all restaurants survived, and by this time, the ban that had been in place was negatively impacting a business in Honolulu, the Shokudo Café, which was "one of the most popular restaurants [in Hawaii] selling exclusively Japanese food. The ban on Japanese goods has made it impossible to get foodstuffs from Japan."[119] Another reason the ban was enacted was in retaliation to Japan signing the Tripartite Pact. One of the reasons for the pact was to deter the United States from entering WWII:

> On 27 September 1940, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan signed the tripartite pact in Berlin. The signatories committed to 'assist one another with all political, economic, and military means when one of the three Contracting Parties is attacked by a power at present not involved in the European war or in the Sino-Japanese conflict. The pact was a warning to the United States to not enter the wars in Europe and China.[120]

The last time an advertisement from Matsuno Sushi Café in Fresno, CA, appeared was on December 6, 1941.[121] The following day Japan declared war against the United States by

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[118] "Matsuno Sushi Cafe," *Fresno Bee*, September 26, 1941, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/701470977/; "Matsuno Sushi Cafe," *Fresno Bee*, October 31, 1941, 10, https://www.newspapers.com/image/701484377/; "Matsuno Sushi Cafe," *Fresno Bee*, November 14, 1941, 18, https://www.newspapers.com/image/701465811/.

[119] "Shokudo Cafe To Be Renamed, End Japanese Catering," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 15, 1941, 4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/275108408/.

[120] Christian Goeschel, "Performing the New Order: The Tripartite Pact, 1940–1945," *Contemporary European History*, July 13, 2022, 1, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777322000340; Jeremy A. Yellen, "Into the Tiger's Den: Japan and the Tripartite Pact, 1940," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51, no. 3 (July 1, 2016): 555–76, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009415580142.

[121] "Matsuno Sushi Cafe," *Fresno Bee*, November 29, 1941, 2, https://www.newspapers.com/image/701472794/; "Matsuno Sushi Cafe," *Fresno Bee*, December 6, 1941, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/701476074/.

bombing Pearl Harbor, which catapulted the United States' entry into WWII.[122] Two months later, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, freezing all Japanese American assets and placing some Japanese in internment camps.[123]

This was likely the determining factor is sushi's near disappearance in print in the United States at this time. An article published in the continental U.S. highlighted the tension between the U.S. and Japan. The article described an incident in which hundreds of Japanese handbills (advertisements) featuring cherry blossoms and Japanese characters were found floating down Broadway Street between 3rd and 4th Streets in Los Angeles. According to the article, bystanders were frightened by the papers, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation ended up getting involved in the matter. The FBI translated the handbills, which were advertisements for "sushi–Japanese rice cakes–and bento–Japanese box lunches, sold by the Sakurasushi, a Little Tokyo confectionery."[124] The article made two points: 1) in the continental U.S., non-Japanese people exhibited fear of attack from Japan and its people, and 2) more notable for the purposes of this thesis, a sushi restaurant was still operating during World War II. Sadly, in Little Tokyo, not all sushi restraunts survived World War II. For example, a photo of a restaurant whose name was obscured but might have been Ogetsu-sushi, had a for sale sign in its window.[125] In Hawaii, there was at least one operating sushi restaurant during the war. In a series of

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[122] John Mueller, "Pearl Harbor: Military Inconvenience, Political Disaster.," *International Security* 16, no. 3 (1991): 172, muse-jhu-edu.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu.
[123] Anne M. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration during World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 1,16-17; Daniels, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 252–54.
[124] "Handbills in Japanese Appear During Alarm," *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1942, 11, https://www.newspapers.com/image/380796335/.
[125] Clem Albers, *Sushi Store Front for Rent*, April 11, 1942, Photograph Gelatin Silver Print, 24 x 30 cm., April 11, 1942, California--Los Angeles, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.73164.

advertisements in the *Honolulu Advertiser* in support of U.S. war bonds, Hakata Sushi Restaurant was named, alongside other local businesses.[126]

As the 1940s progressed, the mention of sushi in the media declined both in Hawaii and the continental U.S. In Hawaii, sushi was not as much a focal point as it was previously, but it still existed, unlike in the continental United States, where sushi was only spotted in a few places in California and the internment camps. One unnamed person in an internment camp wrote a letter to the Chatter Box in the *Millard County Chronicle Progress* in Delta, UT, which was published on August 12, 1943. The article reported that sushi was served at a Japanese wedding, which was held at Topaz (also known as Central War Relocation Center) in Delta, Utah: "A supper served with 'sushi' as the main dish. Sushi is mostly rice with small bits of chicken, shrimp, and fried eggs added after they have all been cooked separately, then a dash of vinegar is added. It was very good."[127] This account shows that despite their adversities, Japanese Americans and immigrants were still trying to maintain their cultures.

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[126] "This Space Is a Contribution to National Defense By:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, July 23, 1942, 4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259251522/; "This Space Is Contributed to America's All-out War Effort by the Following:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, December 5, 1942, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/267895987/; "This Page Contributed by These Following Who Are Sponsoring Patriotism:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 27, 1943, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259720839/; "This Page Contributed by These Following Who Are Sponsoring Patriotism.," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 27, 1943, 5; "This Ad Sponsored in the Interest of Victory By:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, September 18, 1943, 9, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259334452/; "This Ad Sponsored in the Interest of Victory By:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, December 18, 1943, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258947382/; "Sponsored by the Following in the Interest of Promoting Victory:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, April 15, 1944, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/260472175/; "Sponsored by the Following in the Interest of Promoting Victory:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, September 16, 1944, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259269461/; "Sponsored by the Following in the Interest of Promoting Victory:," *Honolulu Advertiser*, October 21, 1944, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/259283297/.

[127] "Chatter Box," *Millard County Chronicle Progress*, August 12, 1943, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/291768230/; Tetsuden Kashima et al., *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 259.

A jab to sushi would come at the expense of the once-impressive House of Mitsukoshi when it closed in 1940 and was turned into a USO Victory Club. The House of Mitsukoshi had been open for three years and had received ample press mention; coincidentally, three years and one day later, an article was published documenting its demise. The November 5, 1943, article made sure to mention that sushi had been served there: "The roof garden, formerly a dining hall, featuring sushi, a cone-shaped Japanese delicacy made of seaweed and rice has been converted into a dance floor for hepcats with a soda fountain to quench their thirst."[128] The article does not say if the House of Mitsukoshi shut down on its own or if it was commandeered, but it is curious how this establishment that just a few years earlier was celebrated as a place to get Japanese goods had now become the place where U.S. soldiers came to dance and relax.

Sushi's popularity picked up where it left off in Hawaii post WWII, this time in a surprising place: a baseball game. Sushi was served during the eighth inning of a Pacific Coast League divisional game: "First inning, boiled lobster; second inning, combination salad; third inning, shrimp balls; fourth inning, sliced raw fish; fifth inning, abalone cucumber; sixth inning, barbecue meat; seventh inning, steamed mullet; eighth inning, sushi; and ninth inning, fruits. Chicken is reserved for overtime."[129] At this game, sushi was served along interesting choices of food for a sporting event, as the quintessential ballpark food of hot dogs and cracker jacks were not served.

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[128] "House of Mitsukoshi to Be Big USO Center Saturday," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 5, 1943, 8, https://www.newspapers.com/image/275570643/.
[129] "Teahouse Baseball Classic to Be Played by Seals Tonight," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 20, 1946, 12, https://www.newspapers.com/image/297956644/; Dennis Snelling, *The Pacific Coast League: A Statistical History, 1903-1957* (McFarland, 1995), 186, 196, 198, 214-15, 279, 313–14.

Sushi resurfaced in other locales after the war ended as well. In an effort to bolster the spirits of the students at the University of Hawaii, the 2nd Annual Campus Day was held to rouse school spirit back to pre-war enthusiasm, and sushi was the only food listed in the article as being sold at the event.[130] In Hakalau, HI, a carnival took place where "hot dogs, soft drinks, coffee, hamburgers, sandwiches, sushi, candy, popcorn, and potato chips" were sold. [131] Sushi also found its place again at carnivals alongside hot dogs and hamburgers, sharing the stage with what had become cuisine that is considered "American." The Naalehu Filipino Club hosted an Independence Day celebration where hot dogs, hamburgers, sushi, udon (Japanese noodles), sandwiches, popcorn, salad, and coffee," were offered. They had expected a big turnout, as "one hundred thirty ladies offered their service in the booth[s]."[132] The need for so many people to run the booths suggested that sushi would have been served to many people, including some who may never have tried it before.

In 1946, a book was published for Western readers about the culture of Japan. Senkichirō Katsumata's *Notes on Japanese Cuisine* stated that sushi was an advanced Japanese dish for only Westerners who had already experienced dishes like sukiyaki, kabayaki, tempura, and soba. Katsumata noted that only after conquering those dishes "the explorer is in a position to penetrate deeper from this borderland into the realm of the strange. What next? The voice of experience will whisper [to] him. *–sushi*."[133]

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[130] Elizabeth Jones, "College Spirit Returns to U.H. At Second Annual Campus Day," *Honolulu Advertiser*, April 14, 1946, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258764448/.
[131] "Hakalau Carnival To Feature Food, Game Concessions," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, June 10, 1946, 3, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555570402/.
[132] "Naalehu Prepares for Lively 4-Day Celebration On Independence Day," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, June 27, 1946, 4, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555572190/.
[133] Katsumata, *Notes on Japanese Cuisine*, (Tokyo: Nippon Printing Company, 1946), 21.

Katsumata also described sushi as a Japanese sandwich while praising the European sandwich:

> *Sushi* is the Japanese counterpart of the European sandwich, though it cannot boast of any dignified association such as is possessed by the sandwich…while the sandwich has three layers with the meat or other relish in the middle, sushi consists of two parts–the ball of boiled rice and the top of fish or other relishes.[134]

Katsumata proceeds to describe the different variations of sushi, which did not all fit the mold, as illustrated by comparing the three layers of a sandwich and the two layers of sushi. He stated that the most common forms of sushi are "*oshizushi*' pressed, '*nigirizushi*' shaped by hand, and the loose form '*gomoku*' or '*chirashi*' served in a bowl."[135] Katsumata also described "*Inarizushi,* the fried tofu forms the cover. In *Gomoku,* rice is mixed with fish, shellfish, lotus root, carrot, mushroom, and ginger. It's sprinkled with seaweed and whipped egg baked."[136] On maki sushi, "The core is made up of *kampyo,* mushroom, and *Oboro* (mashed flesh of prawn or tai)." Then Katsumata told the story of the history of nigirizushi in which he credited the creation of nigiri sushi to the "culinary artist Yohe of Ryogoku in 1824 in Edo." Katsumata described Nigrisushi as "the fancy accompaniments of *nigiri-sushi* are fish (maguro, tai, kohada, kisu, sayori, prawn, cuttlefish, octopus), shellfish, baked egg, and Oboro. Lastly, Katsumata explained that "*Magurozushi* is the favorite of Japanese lovers of *sushi. Maguro* in *sushi* is of two classes–lean and fat, technically called 'zuke' and 'toro' respectively… the use of *maguro* in *sushi* is said to be due to the resources of a keeper of a *sushi* store in

[134] Katsumata, *Notes on Japanese Cuisine,* 22.
[135] Katsumata, *Notes on Japanese Cuisine,* 22.
[136] Katsumata, *Notes on Japanese Cuisine,* 23.

Bakurocho, Edo."[137] Maguro is also known as Bluefin Tuna.[138] Katsumata's book was used to advise travelers on how to approach Japanese food and to inform western readers of Japan's culinary history.

Two more books were published at the end of the decade: *Far East Recipes for the Electric Range featuring Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino Recipes* by contributor Miriam Jackson and *Japanese Cookbook 100 Favorite Japanese Recipes for Western Cooks* by Aya Kagawa. Miriam Jackson said this about *Far East Recipes*: "This folder of "Far East" recipes has been compiled to help you vary your menus with recipes of our Far East neighbors… you will appreciate the ease of preparing them electrically."[139] In this complied list was a recipe for inari sushi, which uses aburaage (fried tofu). The aburaage is cut and then the inside removed, leaving enough room to stuff it with rice and vegetables.[140] Although limited in recipes for sushi, Jackson's recipe book proved that there had been interest in learning new recipes from cuisines foreign to the Western consumer.

In contrast to Jackson's recipe book, Aya Kagawa included multiple recipes on sushi in her book, *Japanese Cookbook 100 Favorite Japanese Recipes for Western Cooks*. Kagawa stated that sushi was "a food made of rice, flavored with vinegar and salt, sometimes also sugar and cooked or raw fish, shellfish, eggs, and vegetables."[141] Kagawa

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[137] Katsumata, *Notes on Japanese Cuisine,* 22.
[138] Michael Ruttenberg, "Safe Sushi," *New England Journal of Medicine* 321, no. 13 (September 28, 1989): 900, https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM198909283211312.
[139] Miriam Jackson, *Far East Recipes for the Electric Range* (Hawaii: The Hawaiian Electric Company, 1949), 20, https://www-foodanddrink-amdigital-co-uk.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/Documents/SearchDetails/ucsd_TX7245A1J311930z](https://www-foodanddrink-amdigital-co-uk.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/Documents/SearchDetails/ucsd_TX7245A1J311930z.
[140] Jackson, *Far East Recipes*, 20.
[141] Kagawa, *Japanese Cookbook 100 Favorite Japanese Recipes for Western Cooks*, 11:117.

also included three recipes on making different types of sushi. Nigirizushi was described as "little oval shapes covered with raw or cooked shellfish or eggs." Other ingredients were listed: Tunney, Kohada, Bloody Clam, Sea Eels, and Prawn. Chirashi-zushi was defined as "mixed loosely with the same ingredients as in [nigiri-zushi]." Kagawa added to the description of chirashi-zushi, "vinegared boiled rice mixed with flavored vegetables, fish, and dried fish. It should be served on a plate and shaped like a hill." Lastly, norimaki sushi or "maki sushi- rolled in nori or seasoned seaweed with same ingredients as [nigiri-zushi]."[142] Kagawa's book began with an introduction of her personal experience and her reason for writing the book: "This book is a collection of ordinary Japanese recipes. In the past, so many foreigners have enjoyed *sukiyaki* and *tempura*, but that is about all." This shows that foreigners had typically only eaten Japanese food with ingredients that they were comfortable with.

Kagawa proceeded to tell a story about how, because of a Christian missionary staying with her family enjoyed the food her family cooked, she was inspired to write the book so that other Westerners could enjoy Japanese food. "It was my good fortune to know a kind American missionary who taught my mother, aunt, and myself about Christianity," she said. Kagawa said that the man's favorite meal was chirashizushi and nigirizushi, and "these memories have convinced me that there must be many foreigners nowadays who would enjoy Japanese food, too, and it is to them I dedicate this book."[143] Kagawa's experience with one Westerner gave her the idea to share her knowledge of Japanese cuisine with the world. This positive experience the missionary had with sushi proved to her that if one person liked the cuisine there were others who would want to

[142] Kagawa, *Japanese Cookbook*, 117–24.
[143] Kagawa, *Japanese Cookbook*, 11.

experience sushi as well. Compared to previous decades, the increase in popularity of sushi had warranted the cuisine to be included in recipe books, which expanded the reach of sushi by reaching people who had not been introduced to the cuisine previously.

The 1940s was a decade of ups and downs for the popularity of sushi. After the rise in popularity early in the ‘40s, sushi’s presence would drastically diminish after Pearl Harbor, but after the war and through the rest of the decade, sushi began a resurgence, as can be seen by the incorporation of sushi at events and even in cookbooks. The increased mention of sushi in periodicals showed that the cuisine’s popularity was on the rise compared to the previous decades. Sushi’s popularity would continue to flourish in the next decade.

Chapter V.

1950s

Sushi in Hawaii exploded in the 1950s, as evidenced by an exponential increase in sushi restaurants, cooking classes, and the availability of ingredients in supermarkets. In the continental United States, sushi made a gradual ascent during the beginning of the decade, surged in the mid-50s, and finished the decade just as strong as sushi had been in Hawaii in previous decades. Specifically, sushi continued to appear in Hawaii at festivals, where large turnouts to these festivals proved that interest in the Japanese culture had reemerged in Hawaii and emerged in the continental U.S. This illustrated that there was great interest in sushi not only in Hawaii, but in the continental United States well after the war. This could be because of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (McCarran-Walter Act), which allowed any Issei already in the United States to become a naturalized citizen.[144] It also allowed Issei already in the United States to buy property, which meant that they could invest in businesses, including restaurants. [145]

The continued interest in sushi in Hawaii in the 1950s would be included in a book published at the beginning of the decade. The book was titled *Sukiyaki: The Art of Japanese Cooking.* It was written in 1950 by an author simply known as Fumiko and was published in Hawaii. Fumiko stated that because of encouragement from guests and friends she wrote this book: "Former classmates and other visitors as well as our local

[144] Nordyke and Matsumoto, "Japanese in Hawaii," 1977, 168; Maddalena Marinari, "Divided and Conquered: Immigration Reform Advocates and the Passage of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 35, no. 3 (April 1, 2016): 1,2, https://doi.org/10.5406/jamerethnhist.35.3.0009; Michael C. LeMay, *The Immigration and Nationality Act Of 1965: A Reference Guide* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 30–32.
[145] Nordyke and Matsumoto, "Japanese in Hawaii," 1977, 17.

friends and associates who have oo-ed and ahh-ed over a tasty dish, have urged me to share my collection of recipes."[146] The book included recipes for sushi-meshi (rice with vinegar sauce), prawn sushi, na no maki sushi, flower sushi, norimaki-sushi, and hamaguri sushi.[147] Fumiko had a similar experience as Aya Kagawa in that both writers were encouraged by people outside of the Japanese culture to show the world how delicious Japanese food could be.

Sushi would extend in the media as far east in the continental United States as Washington D.C. on two occasions. The first was at a potluck for the members of the Library of Congress Cooking Club in 1950. The paper reported that everyone was

> intrigued with the rice rolls, which American-born Mrs. K. L. Takeshta made for the party. They were called 'o-sushi' or Japanese rice sandwiches and are comparable to the open-faced sandwiches we are accustomed to…To make these rice rolls you will first need a sheet of prepared seaweed which Mrs. Takeshta gets from Japan. On top of the seaweed goes a layer of cooked rice which has been seasoned with vinegar, sugar, and salt. The rice filling has a faint sour taste when you eat it, very pleasant. Then on top of the rice goes a layer of bamboo sprouts and mushroom flavored with soy sauce…with an outer ring of dark seaweed, a ring of white rice, and a multicolored center, the o-sushi is as attractive as it is good.[148]

There are some key points to note from the article: first, Mrs. Takeshta had to import her nori from Japan, and second, the article stated that the nori was on the outside of the sushi roll. Unlike in Hawaii where sushi nori was sold at the supermarkets, on the east coast of the continental United States, at least in Washington, D.C., the nori had to be imported. This suggests that sushi had not risen to the level of popularity in the

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[146] Fumiko, *Sukiyaki: The Art of Japanese Cooking and Hospitality*, ed. Scotty Guletz (Honolulu: South Sea Sales, 1950), 1.
[147] Fumiko, Sukiyaki, 53–55.
[148] Violet Faulkner, "International Smorgasbord," *Evening Star*, February 27, 1950, 26, https://www.newspapers.com/image/868246783/.

continental United States as it had in Hawaii. Finally, the seaweed on the outside is the traditional way of making sushi. Rice on the outside was an invention of American sushi when Japanese sushi chefs tried to get Americans to eat sushi. This type of sushi is called inside-out rolls, "reversed construction of typical makizushi, with the nori wrapped inside the rice instead of outside. Chefs assumed that provincial and picky American eaters would not find eating paper appetizing, so they buried the nori inside the rice."[149] The article disproved this theory, reporting that sushi had been served with the nori on the outside to positive reviews.

The second time sushi came to Washington D.C. in the 1950s was on September 10, 1953, when Prince Akihito of Japan traveled to Washington to speak with high-ranking officials. Afterward, 500 guests were invited to the Japanese Embassy, where American food was passed over for foods like yakitori, sukiyaki, and sushi.[150] Both the Associated Press and Newspaper Enterprise Association reported on the visit, and numerous newspapers around the continental United States picked up the story. Each had their own take on the visit: one newspaper headline was "Sushi for Brass Hats," and another "Akihito Diners Pass Yankee Food; Take on Sukiyaki, Sushi."[151] Other

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[149] McKevitt, *Consuming Japan*, 163.
[150] "Akihito Diners Pass Yankee Food; Take on Sukiyaki, Sushi," *Rafu Shimpo*, September 11, 1953, 1, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19530911-01.1.1&srpos=1&e=------195-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi----1953-----; Lewis Gulick, "Prince Entertains US Officials at Japanese Dinner," *Sacramento Bee*, September 11, 1953, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/617599448/; "Akihito Feeds Notables Yakitori, Sukiyaki, Sushi," *Herald And News*, September 11, 1953, 16, https://www.newspapers.com/image/630176250/; "Exotic Japanese Dishes Feature Akihito's Dinner," *Santa Barbara News-Press*, September 11, 1953, 1, https://www.newspapers.com/image/928429737/; "Japan Prince Hosts Top U.S. Officials," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, September 11, 1953, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/704895265/; "Japanese Prince Host at Dinner," *Stockton Record*, September 11, 1953, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/844654234/; "Sushi For Brass Hats: Akihito Gives a Party– All Washington Attends," *Oakland Tribune*, September 11, 1953, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/276842282/.
[151] "Sushi For Brass Hats: Akihito Gives a Party– All Washington Attends," 6; "Akihito Diners Pass Yankee Food; Take on Sukiyaki, Sushi," 1.

newspaper organizations adhered to what the AP and NEA wrote. Notable to this article is that sushi and other Japanese fare had gained popularity with the Washington D.C. guests even over the more familiar options at the event.[152] These examples in Washington, D.C., show how interest in Japanese culture increased as the two countries repaired their relationship. Sushi was no longer seen as a bizarre Japanese dish, but rather, newspapers reported that it had been a big hit among the American guests.

Sushi had become so popular with non-Japanese people by this time that the ingredients were beginning to be sold outside of Japanese markets. In Honolulu, the EWA Supermarket advertised sushi "no sei vinegar."[153] The Akamine Brothers market advertised nori and Kikkoman shoyu.[154] The Market City International building, in Honolulu, sold different types of food: pork sausage, roast beef, sea bass, salmon, and lobster tail, but it also housed a Japanese delicatessen that advertised cone sushi and rolled sushi.[155] The U-Save Commissary also advertised nori for sushi.[156] Also, the Tomisato Store in Honolulu advertised nori for sale.[157] As well as in Hilo, the Pahoa

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[152] Lewis Gulick, "Prince Entertains US Officials At Japanese Dinner," *The Sacramento Bee*, September 11, 1953, 6, ; "Japanese Prince Host at Dinner," *Stockton Record*, September 11, 1953, 6; Peter Edson, "Japanese Planning Colorful Affair for Rival of Crown Prince Akihito," *Redwood City Tribune*, September 5, 1953, 12, https://www.newspapers.com/image/842087807/; "Japanese Dishes: Crown Prince Host to Top Officials," *The Pomona Progress Bulletin*, September 11, 1953, 2, https://www.newspapers.com/image/623566178/; "Japan Prince Hosts Top U.S. Officials," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, September 11, 1953, 7.

[153] "EWA Super Market," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, February 23, 1950, 20, https://www.newspapers.com/image/268988895/.

[154] "Akamine Bros. Market," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, March 30, 1950, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555563831/.

[155] "Market City International Food Building," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 30, 1950, 19, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258490153/; "Market City International Food Building," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 6, 1950, 19, https://www.newspapers.com/image/268939224/; "Market City International Food Building," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 13, 1950, 21, https://www.newspapers.com/image/280943425/.

[156] "U-Save Commissary," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 25, 1950, 24, https://www.newspapers.com/image/280943403/.

[157] "Quality Foods at Attractive Savings at Tomisato Store," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 29, 1950, 24, https://www.newspapers.com/image/268937276/.

Cash & Carry grocery store advertised selling nori.[158] Supermarkets capitalized on the popularity of sushi in Hawaii by supplying their consumers with the ingredients needed to make sushi. By making the ingredients readily available, sushi was able to reach the homes and dinner tables of many Hawaiian citizens. In contrast, ingredients took longer to appear widely in supermarkets in the continental United States.

Further interest in sushi in Hawaii can be seen through the emergence of "experts" in the media in 1953. These experts gave demonstrations and classes on how to make the cuisine. In Honolulu, the team of Mr. and Mrs. Tsuji, visiting from Osaka, Japan, gave a demonstration on sushi, but they made it into different forms, such as a plum blossom, bamboo, crane, and a turtle.[159] This shows an increasing curiosity in sushi beyond just the rolls that had to this point been the hallmark of sushi. Experts on making the cuisine also appeared on television. One such example was a fifteen-minute segment that aired on July 5, 1953, entitled "Sushi Cooking School" on Channel 9 KGMB-TV in Hawaii.[160] Instead of trying to figure out how to make sushi from reading a cookbook or newspaper recipe, a visual demonstration was provided. The interest in sushi had increased and justified the help of experts to spread the knowledge on how to make the cuisine, but with visual demonstrations. Interest in sushi reached new heights in Hawaii, while in the continental U.S. interest in sushi has begun to rise. Familiarity with sushi in the continental US had followed a similar path as it did in Hawaii in prior decades, by being a food sold at festivals and bazaars as a way to introduce people to this cuisine.

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[158] "Shop and Save at Piopio Cash & Carry," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, July 13, 1950, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/555632910/.
[159] Joan Shimamura, "Japanese Culinary Experts Demonstrate Artistic Food," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 28, 1953, 17, https://www.newspapers.com/image/268515002/.
[160] "Sunday KGMB-TV-Channel 9," *Honolulu Advertiser*, July 4, 1953, 25, https://www.newspapers.com/image/258066547/.

In the 1950s, bazaars and carnivals featuring sushi began appearing in the continental U.S., first on the west coast and then making their way toward the east coast. These popular events were opportunities for many Americans to experience sushi for the first time. In 1952, in Long Beach, CA, sushi was served at the Japanese American Citizens League Carnival.[161] At a Buddhist festival in Palo Alto, CA, sushi had been served along with hamburgers, hot dogs, and coffee.[162] An eastward expansion also appeared when Japanese people shared their culture in Chicago, IL, in 1953. The JACL planned a carnival that sold sushi, hot dogs, noodles, barbecue meat, and pop [soda].[163] In Rocklin, CA, a 50th anniversary bazaar by the Loomis Methodist Church served sushi, pastries, hot dogs, and soda.[164] In Hollywood, another bazaar held by the Hollywood Independent Church not only sold sushi, but also tacos, barbecue, and chow mein.[165] Furthermore, in San Diego, CA, a bazaar was held, this time by the Young Buddhist Association (YBA), and sushi was sold along with, hot dogs, botamochi, Spanish food, and drinks.[166] Selling sushi along other street fare was the very tactic that Tsuyoshi Matsumoto had suggested in the 1940s. Making something else available for those who were reluctant to try sushi brought people into the vicinity of sushi, therefore giving sushi

[161] "Judges to Select Carnival Queen," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, June 12, 1952, 19, https://www.newspapers.com/image/704892878/.
[162] "Unusual Fare to Be Served by Buddhists," *Peninsula Times Tribune*, August 15, 1952, 2, https://www.newspapers.com/image/838942608/.
[163] "Chicago JACL Unit Plans Fund Drive, Carnival, and Eight Inaugural Ball," *Northwest Times*, September 30, 1953, 2, https://www.newspapers.com/image/893754060/.
[164] "50th Anniversary Bazaar," *Placer Herald*, March 18, 1954, 5, https://www.newspapers.com/image/475688593/.
[165] "Hollywood Independent Set for Church Bazaar," *Rafu Shimpo*, March 25, 1954, 3, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19540325-01.1.3&srpos=3&e=------195-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi----1954-----.
[166] "Esdee YBA Bazaar Set for May 15," *Rafu Shimpo*, May 6, 1954, 3, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19540506-01.1.3&srpos=4&e=------195-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi----1954-----.

a chance to be tried by those who had been reluctant. Bazaars and carnivals had been the way people in Hawaii had experienced sushi, and this mirrored tactic became a way for sushi to be experienced in the continental U.S., outside of Japanese restaurants.

Indeed, the number of restaurants in both Hawaii and the continental U.S. continued to grow in the 1950s. In 1955, there was an addition to the group of restaurants that served sushi in in Seattle, WA with the opening of Miyako Sushi Café.[167] The demand for sushi did not slowdown in Hawaii as more restaurants opened on the islands. In 1955, in Honolulu, Sekiya's Restaurant & Delicatessen opened and had sushi on the menu.[168] In Hilo, Y's Lunch Shop opened, stating that they specialized in sushi.[169] The growing number of restaurants proved there was a demand for sushi. On the mainland, in 1957, a menu from Tsuruya restaurant in New York City suggested trying sushi as an appetizer.[170] This restaurant established the presence of sushi on the east coast. Also in 1957, the Wisteria restaurant in Honolulu advertised a mix of Japanese and American style food. The same tactic that had been used at fairs and carnivals to get Americans to try sushi by also offering hamburgers and steak started to be used in restaurants. Another example of this can be seen in Gvion and Trostler's article "From Spaghetti and Meatballs through Hawaiian Pizza to Sushi," which was published in the Journal of Popular Culture.

> Restaurants told their version of ethnicity and controlled its form of propagation, dissemination, and contextualization by exposing Americans

[167] "Miyako Sushi Cafe," *Northwest Times*, January 1, 1955, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/893832356/.
[168] "Sekiya's Restaurant & Delicatessen," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, August 31, 1955, 34, https://www.newspapers.com/image/268861752/.
[169] "Y's Lunch Shop," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, September 10, 1955, sec. Business Notes, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/556511428/.
[170] *Tsuruya Menu New York City*, 1957, Menu, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4 in., 1957, The Culinary Institute of America Menu Collection, http://ciadigitalcollections.culinary.edu/digital/collection/p16940coll1/id/9430/rec/1.

> to the types of dishes that would appeal to their taste rather than to the food of the immigrants… Ethnic dishes were placed in the menu along with mainstream dishes such as hamburgers, tuna salad, or a diet plate. The Rice Bowl (Chicago, IL), for instance, identified itself as a Chinese restaurant. Yet its menu chose to reflect on some popular assumptions about Chinese food in American culture. Via a bowl of rice, largely associated with a Chinese staple, on the cover, it attracted diners, yet also suggested a list of ''American Dinners'' that included dishes such as sirloin steak, pork tenderloin, veal cutlet, or prime rib steak, all served with either boiled or French-fried potatoes and mixed vegetables.[171]

As with the Wisteria restaurant in Honolulu, The Rice Bowl echoed the same technique to lure in diners by offering American and Asian dishes, a technique similar to those used at the carnivals and fundraisers from decades past.

The increased appearance of and demand for sushi did not represent universal love for the cuisine. This was expressed in an article in 1958. Gene Sherman, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times,* wrote an article asking its readers if they were ready for sushi sandwiches, giving a description of sushi. After the description, he interjected, "On second thought, but with the utmost politeness, I'll take a hot dog."[172] Hasia Diner stated in her book *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration*, "What one group eats and enjoys… causes utter revulsion in others. Some tastes—spicy, bland, salty, pulverized, lumpy—seem just right to some and abominable to others."[173] Diner stated that this type of like and dislike of foods stems from childhood, and during the "course of a life-time, individuals learn to eat new things and even like them."[174] Despite Sherman's skeptical view on sushi, the expansion of buying the

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[171] Gvion and Trostler, "From Spaghetti and Meatballs through Hawaiian Pizza to Sushi," 956.
[172] Gene Sherman, "Cityside," *Los Angeles Times*, July 23, 1958, 2, https://www.newspapers.com/image/381129308/.
[173] Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration*, Edition Unstated (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 9.
[174] Diner, *Hungering for America*, 8.

cuisine in the continental U.S. continued in Gardena, CA, when the Super Food Market Spot advertised selling sushi made-to-order inside the Town & Country Drugs.[175]

Although one person's views had been against sushi, the demand for sushi was still increasing in the 50s. These mixed views of sushi continued in the continental U.S. when the *Oakland Tribune* and *Rafu Shimpo* reported on sushi being sold at the soon-to-occur Olympic games. They would be called "sushi burgers," and the articles reported that sushi burgers could be as popular as Coney Island hotdogs and may replace hotdogs at the Olympics in 1964. The description given for sushi was raw fish and rice squeezed together. From the description of sushi, it is not clear whether sushi burgers had been served resembling a hamburger or this was the American media comparing sushi to another cuisine, like jelly rolls and sandwiches.[176]

Interest in sushi remained strong in the continental U.S., with frequent mentions of carnivals and festivals as well as an expanding assortment of ingredients available for sale to make sushi. In Chicago, IL, the Chicago Buddhist Church had a carnival where sushi was one of the dishes available for purchase. In Gardena, CA, Buddhists had a Obon festival were sushi and hot dogs were sold.[177] In San Mateo, CA, Econ Market, a grocery store, advertised selling nori.[178] Festivals had become the go-to location for

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[175] "Super Food Market Spot," *Gardena Valley News*, July 24, 1958, 26, https://www.newspapers.com/image/748989871/.
[176] "Olympic Sushi Burger," *Oakland Tribune*, May 29, 1959, 4E, https://www.newspapers.com/image/331935068/; "Sushi Burger May Replace Hot Dogs," *Rafu Shimpo*, June 1, 1959, 1, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19590601-01.1.1&srpos=3&e=------195-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi----1959-----.
[177] "Gardena Fujinkai to Participate in Obon," *Rafu Shimpo*, August 6, 1959, 3, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19590806-01.1.3&srpos=7&e=------195-en-25--1--img-txIN-sushi----1959-----. "Cheers for Obon!" *Gardena Valley News*, August 13, 1959, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/748985383/.
[178] "Econ Market," *San Mateo Times*, September 30, 1959, 40, https://www.newspapers.com/image/39004338/.

sushi. It had been the way sushi expanded in Hawaii and would become a primary way that sushi would be experienced in the continental U.S. Due to this increased exposure, ingredients started to become available for sushi to be made at home. Hawaii continued the trend of making sushi available with the further expansion of restaurants and increased availability of sushi. In Hilo, another restaurant opened that sold sushi, The Sushi & Okazu Shop.[179] Lastly, in Honolulu, the Kailua Super Market advertised selling sushi ahead of time by preorder.[180] Restaurants that served sushi had become commonplace in Hawaii. Supermarkets had expanded their inventory to entice shoppers not to only buy the ingredients they needed, but also to provide the consumer with a one stop shop for fresh sushi and groceries.

During the post-war years of the 1950s, sushi continued its popularity in Hawaii and was also on the rise in the continental U.S., especially along the west coast. Sushi made it to the east coast, as it was on the menu for an event in Washington D.C. where the Japanese cuisine was favored over American standards by the attendees and at a restaurant in New York City that served sushi. As sushi's popularity rose, so did the desire to learn how to make sushi. There were several sushi cooking classes offered in Hawaii and on the west coast. The turmoil of the 1940s did not deter the growing popularity of sushi in the continental U.S. Sushi rebounded to become a mainstay once again at bazaars, carnivals, and even local delicatessens. In Hawaii, grocery stores not only carried many products needed to prepare sushi, but some even provided customers

[179] "Sushi & Okazu Shop," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, October 23, 1959, 7, https://www.newspapers.com/image/556216867/?terms=sushi&match=1; "Sushi Shop Grand Opening Is Saturday," *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, October 30, 1959, 3, https://www.newspapers.com/image/556217396/.
[180] "Kailua Supermarket," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, December 28, 1959, 46, https://www.newspapers.com/image/270249211/?terms=sushi&match=1.

with the option to preorder their sushi to go. The 1950s closed with sushi reaching its highest level of popularity in American history to that point.

Conclusion

Sushi had been present in the United States well before the 1960s in Hawaii and the continental United States in restaurants, and at carnivals and school functions. A gradual acceptance of Japanese culture throughout the decades paved the way for sushi to reach the masses at a whole new level. The opening of upscale sushi bars on both coasts of the continental U.S. serves as evidence for sushi's long-awaited entrance into American fine dining.[181] In addition, the media presence of sushi skyrocketed in the '60s, as can be seen in an influx of books published in the '60s that feature sushi.[182] The rest is well-documented, and it can be argued that sushi is more popular than hotdogs and hamburgers today. But sushi had been a part of the United States well before its flashy introduction in the 1960s, both in Hawaii and in the continental United States. From its humble beginnings at bazaars, festivals, and school functions to its position as the food of the socially elite, sushi has proven to be a survivor that fought its way up the ranks of American cuisine.

Some historians and the American media have given credit to sushi coming to the United States to Kawafuku restaurant, due to the glamour of putting in a sushi bar. Kawafuku, at the time of the sushi bar's installment, was owned by Tokijiro Nakashima,

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[181] Jonas House, "Sushi in the United States, 1945–1970," *Food and Foodways* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 40–62, https://doi.org/10.1080/07409710.2017.1420353.

[182] Tomi Egami, *Typical Japanese Cooking*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Shibata Publishing Company, 1961), 80–83, 94–105, https://www.foodanddrink.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/MSU_TX7245J3_E33_1961; Masaru Doi, *The Art of Japanese Cookery* (Japan: Shibata Publishing Company, 1962), 34–47; Nina Froud, *Cooking the Japanese Way* (London: Spring Books, 1963), 164–87, https://www-foodanddrink-amdigital-co-uk.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/Documents/SearchDetails/MSU_TX7245J3_F768_1963; Heihachi Tanaka and Betty A. Nicholas, *The Pleasures of Japanese Cooking* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), 1, 12, 13, 32–37; Masaru Doi, *Cook Japanese* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1964), 12; Japanese Cooking Companions, *Practical Japanese Cooking* (Tokyo: Japan Publications, 1967), 21–22; Russ Rudzinski, *Japanese Country Cookbook* (San Francisco: Nitty Gritty Books, 1969), 106–10.

and the legend of this sushi bar circles around two other men who had to convince Nakashima to install the sushi bar in the first place. Nakashima was against serving sushi and said, "No, no, no – we will be run out of business."[183] The two men who convinced Nakashima were Nortioshi Kanai, who ran the Mutual Trading Company, a wholesaler business that imported goods from Japan, and Harry Wolff Jr., who was a consultant for the Mutual Trading Company.[184] The American media and several noted historians have credited these three men for bringing sushi to Los Angeles, and depending on the source, Kawafuku first sold sushi in either 1962 or 1965.[185] Adding to the ambiguity, my research revealed that Kawafuku started selling sushi on March 15, 1961.[186] Regardless of the exact year that Kawafuku popularized sushi in the United States, the restaurant cannot claim credit for being the first establishment to introduce sushi to the U.S. As seen in many obscure and neglected periodicals from the first half of the 20th century, sushi was in the country long before the 1960s, but because of its relative isolation in Hawaii, which was a territory of the U.S. before becoming a state in 1959, historians and the media have missed a crucial part of the story. My research shows that sushi has a long-standing and rich history in Hawaii, one that should be added to the existing culinary history of sushi in the continental United States.

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[183] Miller, "This Little Tokyo Restaurant Is Long Gone. But It Changed L.A.'s Food Scene Forever"; Miller, "How Two Friends Sparked L.A.'s Sushi Obsession—and Changed the Way America Eats," A10, A11.
[184] Miller, "How Two Friends Sparked L.A.'s Sushi Obsession—and Changed the Way America Eats," A10, A11.
[185] Naomichi Ishige, *Japanese Restaurants in Los Angeles* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1985), 202; Miller, "This Little Tokyo Restaurant Is Long Gone. But It Changed L.A.'s Food Scene Forever"; Miller, "How Two Friends Sparked L.A.'s Sushi Obsession—and Changed the Way America Eats," A10, A11; Eric C. Rath, *Oishii: The History of Sushi* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), 77.
[186] "Opening Wednesday New Sushi Section-Take Out or Served-Kawafuku Cafe," *Rafu Shimpo*, March 14, 1961, 1, https://gpa-eastview-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/rafu/?a=d&d=trs19610314-01.1.1&srpos=7&e=------196-en-25-.

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