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# NEW YORK DINING

## HAKKASAN



One of the city's most beautiful cocktail lounges can be found at Hakkasan, an authentic and elegant temple of modern Cantonese cuisine. The bar itself in the Ling Ling lounge is lighted sapphire blue glass and the hypnotic moving image on the wall behind the long bar soothes as you sip a Hakka, a tall cocktail of vodka, sake, coconut, passion fruit, and lychee. There are small tables in the lounge, where you can enjoy some tasty morsels from the "small eat" menu, such as the justifiably famous dim sum. While the restaurant can accommodate 200, the dining areas are arranged in smaller comfortable rooms divided by wooden latticework.

The menu at this Michelin-starred restaurant, one of several in cities around the world, is in the hands of International Development Chef Ho Chee Boon, who creates traditional dishes with local ingredients and influences such as Stir Fry Lobster with wild mushroom, XO sauce and truffle braised egg noodles. Chilean Sea Bass is grilled and made succulent with Chinese honey. For the meat lover there is Stir Fry Black Pepper Rib Eye with Merlot. New on the menu is Fried Quail with Lemongrass served with thin, delicate steamed Mandarin pancakes. Peking duck is a culinary star here and prepared in a traditional oven brought over from Hong Kong. There are several ways to enjoy it here and in addition to the whole roast duck, there is a Crispy Duck Salad with pomelo, pine nut and shallot in a tangy citrus and pomegranate dressing.

Brunch Saturday and Sunday, 11:30am to 3:00pm; Dinner Sunday, 5:30pm to 10:00pm; Dinner Monday to Wednesday, 5:30 to 11:00pm; Dinner Thursday to Saturday, 5:30pm to 12:00am.

**NYC LOCATION**  
311 W. 43rd Street • 212-776-1818 • hakkasannyc.com

## MORIMOTO

This bi-level restaurant under the High Line at Chelsea Market with a wall made of 17,000 spring water bottles has a feeling of openness and light—and fun. At the long wood sushi bar, watch fresh fish turned into culinary art by men and women in white coats with big knives, while Executive Chef Erik Battes keeps the kitchen humming. For more intimacy, there are elegant dining alcoves separated by glass dividers.

Try the Omakase, the chef's tasting menu with its signature opening course of Toro Tartare that arrives in a bowl of ice. Scoop it up with a tiny paddle and add some wasabi, crème fraiche, minced scallions, or rice crackers. Next, three slices of sashimi on a lovely ceramic dish are garnished with tiny flowers, paper thin radish slices, and a wonderful sauce of hot sesame oil with citrus soy. Ah, here comes a white ceramic bowl with a warming candle in its base. It is filled with a rich tangy dipping sauce of oil, miso and anchovy. Fresh baby vegetables, toast and a slice of roasted chicken are there for the dipping. One very plump and tender oyster arrives on its shell accompanied by seared foie gras and a teriyaki reduction. Use the tiny fork to pick up the oyster and pop it whole into your mouth. Pure bliss! A mandarin and plum wine popsicle on a small toothpick will clear your palette for the Surf and Turf of wagu skirt steak ribbons with ginger, cilantro and Japanese mountain yams paired with roasted lobster meat seasoned with curry and kaffir lime.

A scoop of green tea ice cream with mango sauce berries sprinkled with yogurt powder is a perfect finish. Dinner daily 5 pm to midnight.



**NYC LOCATION**  
88 Tenth Avenue • 212-989-8883 • morimotonyc.com

## HAKUBAI



Hakubai, is an authentic Japanese restaurant just steps down from the lobby of the Kitano Hotel on Park Avenue. The only decoration is several elegant ikabana flower arrangements. Shoji screens enclose some private rooms with tatami cushions where you can dine in Japanese style, served by women in traditional obi-tied kimonos. Executive Chef Yukihiko Sato creates several types of dining experiences such as Kaiseki Omakase dinners and Kenbi luncheons.

A new addition to the menu is the six-course Hakkaisan Sake Pairing dinner. The cold sake, which has a surprisingly warming flavor, is presented in a small glass decanter embedded in a bowl of finely crushed ice decorated with a red berry branch. Keep your own little glass on the ice while you enjoy the amuse bouche served on a tray with four uniquely flavorful dishes. A turnip tofu cube is paired with salmon roe and wasabi; a watercress salad is topped with bonita flakes. Then an assortment of sashimi is so cold and fresh, you actually sense the ocean. It is simply garnished with shredded fresh daikon. A perfectly fried piece of Spanish mackerel with miso is a softly sweet experience paired with a crispy deep-fried shrimp wrapped in shiso leaf with Japanese basil. (By now the warm sake is in front of you in a heated ceramic carafe.) A tuna sashimi entrée marinated in a spicy sauce is served over sushi rice and accompanied by a bowl of miso soup with the tiniest baby mushrooms you may ever see.

A green tea ice cream with cherry sauce and pineapple cubes is a happy ending along with tea in a porcelain blue and white cup on a teak saucer. Lovely!

Lunch weekdays 11:30 am to 1 pm; Dinner daily 6 to 8 pm.

**NYC LOCATION**  
66 Park Avenue • 212-885-7111 • kitano.com

## perfect pan-asian

By Marian Betancourt

## BRUSHSTROKE

Take a seat at the carved wood sushi bar so you can watch one of the sushi "professors" from Japan's top culinary school peel a radish with a large cleaver until the entire radish has become a spiral, or magically create a pouff of shredded carrot to accompany one of the beautiful dishes in this tribute to modern Kaiseki cuisine. The entire kitchen is open to view as the cooks quietly go about their preparations in a restaurant that is a joint venture between the school and New York restaurateur David Bouley.

The refreshing Hommage cocktail of homemade elderflower puree, lemon juice and sparkling wine, with a spiral of lemon zest, perks up your taste buds for the treats to come. A little bowl with what appears to contain a puffy cloud will be set before you as you begin Chef Eiji Ichimura's seven-course tasting menu. This is scallop sashimi with baby spring vegetables, served with a tiny wooden spoon on a round tray that will stay in front of you throughout the changing courses. The truffle broth with shaved truffles, lobster, and tofu is true umami! The sushi course comes with wasabi and two sauces, one for the light fish, and one for the dark fish. Lobster is accompanied by seared duck foie gras and a shitake mushroom, deep fried and made to look like a tiny tree with crispy branches. A savory ice cream of sea beans is a perfect finale dressed with white chocolate syrup at table.

The very knowledgeable sommelier will guide you through the sake and wine list for perfect pairings.

Dinner Monday to Saturday; seatings at 6 pm and 9 pm.



**NYC LOCATION**  
30 Hudson Street • 212-791-3771 • brushstrokenyc.com