

# Pasta alla Japan

A welcome change from all the new sushi bars, yoshoku restaurant Shio brings Japanese-style Western food to Sukhumvit Soi 49. **BY REENA KARIM**



Sukhumvit Soi 49 has been buzzing with new eateries in the last few months, most notable among them being the Japanese Shio Yoshoku Café and Restaurant. The sleek restaurant serves up yoshoku cuisine from Japan's Meiji era, when Western-style additions were first introduced to traditional Japanese dishes, and vice versa. Shio is the brain child of the young chef and co-owner Yada Ruangsukudom, who returned from Tokyo's renowned Hattori Nutrition College.

The metal-grey, ground floor establishment rests among tall trees and well-manicured bushes. Inside, bare dark wooden tables and

grey leather booth-style seats are romantically accentuated with brightly coloured carnations and candles, while dim futuristic lighting fixtures hang from the ceiling. The restaurant stays clear of oriental accessories and focuses on abstract wall decor and a whimsical metal chandelier. The focal point of the restaurant is the bar, which stands against a background of textured glass and displays a range of spirits and desserts. Outside, there is a wooden patio surrounded by plants, and a Zen garden with a two-seater swing.

And due in part to the launch of their lunch set menu (B250–B359), Shio is seeing Japanese visitors flocking during the day, while the dinner service seats mostly Indians and Thais.

## THE FOOD

The menu features many Western dishes, like Italian sausage and French fries (B260), Mexican-style scallop gratin (B350), and Australian beef steak (B690), but Japanese influences can be found in dishes like the Okinawa crepe (B220). We started with Piedmont-inspired *bagna cauda* salad (B200): sliced raw baby carrots, asparagus, apples, bell peppers, and cucumber in a glass filled with ice, served with warm anchovy and garlic dip. The dip was light and balanced without being too overbearing on the garlic or anchovy. Next, we tried gnocchi with truffle cream sauce (B350), with generous amounts of asparagus and mushroom. We also went for the dried curry rice (B270). The Indian curry-flavoured dish had ground pork with



carrots and onion, spread over a bed of fragrant Japanese rice, and topped with scrambled eggs and fresh vegetables. Chef Yada suggested we try linguine with seafood (B380). The item is not listed on the menu but will be featured in the coming weeks. The item came with mussels, prawns, and calamari with a serving of green linguine. When we finished the dish, we pretty much scooped up the last of the buttery broth. Lastly, we dug into their chicken teriyaki steak (B440). The chicken came in small pieces on a bed of mash potatoes. The crispy-skinned chicken was doused in sweet sauce and came with slices of pumpkin, asparagus, mushroom, and baby carrots, with hints of coarse pepper corns. For dessert, Yada brought out the beautifully presented Shio caramel cheesecake (B135), a Japanese-style, no-bake cheesecake with glazed berries. We got a sweet surprise with the first bite, as salted caramel cream oozed from within. The sweet and salty combo made the dessert a delightful treat.



## THE DRINKS

The beverage list, like the dining menu, came with a bit of everything—classic cocktails (B240) to red and white sangria (B260 by the glass and B720 for a pitcher), and Japan-inspired signature cocktails such as the Fuji apple martini and Midori sour (B280). But since this is a Japanese restaurant, indulge in sake-spiked cocktails such as Yellow Martini (B280) or the Tokyo Rouge (B280) with sake-marinated blueberries and chilli peppers.

Sukhumvit Soi 49

Open daily 11am–5:30pm, 6–10pm

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