

## Roll out

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An array of sushi and Japanese-inspired dishes will be on sale at the 2015 New Orleans Sushi Fest. Participating restaurant Chiba will offer its Strawberry Satsuma Roll, pictured above. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Sushi functions as a building block cuisine in New Orleans. Local Japanese eateries use elegantly simple classics as a platform to construct trendy new creations. On Sunday (Aug. 16) from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m., over 2,800 sushi aficionados are expected to converge at the UNO Lakefront Arena to celebrate Japanese culture and sample the latest delicious combinations at the [2015 New Orleans Sushi Fest](#).

Presented by Royal Honda, the festival will donate a portion of proceeds to the Japan Society of New Orleans and the Japan Club of New Orleans.

“You’ll be able to go to 20 restaurants, all under one roof,” says Cheryl Lemoine, director of marketing and events at Renaissance Publishing, which is producing the annual festival.

Todd Matherne, CEO of Renaissance Publishing, conceptualized Sushi Fest last year. Realizing there were no festivals dedicated to the Japanese delicacy – one of the fastest growing local food genres – Matherne decided to spearhead the event.

The festival will showcase dishes from local sushi sanctuaries. Uptown’s [Chiba](#) will offer its Strawberry Satsuma Roll, a summer staple combining yellowtail, jalapeno, mango, strawberries and scallops with satsuma ponzu. [Rock-n-Sake](#) will invite guests to dig into tuna nachos, topping crispy wonton chips with smelt roe, sesame seeds, fresh tuna and creamy garlic jalapeno-ponzu sauce.

“We also have several non-sushi restaurants doing Japanese-inspired dishes,” Lemoine says.

After a bite, guests can explore the festival’s marketplace (featuring crafts, traditional kimonos and sushi-inspired jewelry) or belt it out onstage in the Cat’s Meow Karaoke Club.

Between sets of Japanese entertainment and an Aikido demonstration, Flow Tribe will get crowds moving with live music from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m.

Additionally, the festival will host a sushi chef showdown. During the friendly competition, judges will distinguish dishes with awards, including “Best Presentation” and “Best Use of Wasabi.” Ultimately, one innovative sushi chef will be crowned the 2015 Grand Champion.

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