

Everybody Loves Ramen [PR]

Perhaps you are familiar with the word 'Ramen'? At first glance it seems to be just a Chinese soup dish with noodles, but there is actually a clear distinction between Chinese cuisine and the popular Japanese dish. Allow me to share the secret of its popularity.

Ramen shops are constantly bustling with crowds of customers, from little children to the elderly. Firm noodles are immersed in one of a variety of different flavoured soups, on top of which are placed assorted colourful ingredients. This is the basic style of Ramen. Originally based on Chinese cuisine, Ramen's character evolved into a quintessentially Japanese dish. One typical type of Ramen features thick *Miso* (soybean paste) soup. This Miso Ramen is known as 'Sapporo Ramen' after its birthplace in the Hokkaido city. Also in Hokkaido, 'Hakodate Ramen' is another popular dish. It uses simple light spices and is generally known as Shio Ramen. The delicate old-style Japanese flavour and *Shoyu* (soy-sauce) based broth are characteristic of 'Tokyo Ramen'. Rich, pork-based Ramen, born in Fukuoka and named 'Hakata Ramen' is also common. Aside from the soups, noodles can be curly or straight, and range from thick to superfine, carefully chosen to create the perfect bowl of Ramen. The added ingredients also range from vegetables to meat and seafood, cooked in different styles.

With thousands of restaurants in every area of Japan using things like bean paste, soy sauce, and pork broth as a base, each Ramen shop produces a distinctive soup and stock, as well as showing their individuality in the types of noodles and toppings available. Utilising the natural flavour of ingredients, soup, noodles and toppings, the different tastes attain an exquisite balance, producing a flavour that can become a passion. Choosing according to personal taste and mood, the



Well known types of Ramen soup flavours, *Shoyu* (top), *Miso* (right) and *Shio* (left), for which you can choose not only soup flavour, but also a variety of toppings.

abundance of variation and flavour means customers never grow weary of Ramen. Despite the cooking time required, Ramen is delicious, comparatively cheap and easy to eat, which accounts for its national popularity.

In Perth, Ramen dishes are also popular among the Asian community as noodle is part of their everyday diet. However, these days Australians are also becoming more accustomed to Japanese food, as they realise it is a healthier alternative to the traditional fast foods as well as being a good value meal. Therefore, people are becoming more aware of the different types of Japanese food, such as Ramen.

Among the many Japanese restaurants in Perth, Zensaki Japanese Restaurant is one of few places where Ramen is served. Zensaki will be opening a new store in the city centre in November 2009 which specialises in Ramen and will also feature some of their popular rice bowl (*Donburi*) dishes. Their Ramen dishes are original Japanese recipes from Sapporo and created using fresh ingredients to ensure every dish is full of flavour. The chef recommends his specially made grilled chicken and *Char-shu* (marinated pork cooked over many hours) as toppings.

Information:

Zensaki Ramen and Donburi (opening in November 2009)
83 Barrack St. Perth