

Sushi Deluxe

Fresh, rich sushi in a futuristic setting



COURTESY OF DOUZO

THE AMAEBI MANGO roll, a house specialty at Douzo, comes in a curvy line on a long white plate, looking like a kingly golden serpent. A precisely carved crown of cucumber sits atop the deep-fried ornamental shrimp head that precedes the seven succulent sushi pieces forming the body.

Composed of mango and cucumber wrapped in raw shrimp, the roll is topped with a juicy mango sauce and a dollop of black caviar. Overall, the flavor was new and refreshing. Not so the similar textures: the smooth, slippery mango and soft, sweetish shrimp were a little too much of a good thing all in one bite. But points were scored for their interplay with the salty caviar, and the handsome presentation. The \$13.95 dish is at once creatively flavored and showy—like much of the

Above: The “Crunchy Roll” with salmon, tuna, and mango sauce. **Right:** Douzo’s sushi counter.

“modern” Japanese food at this Back Bay hot spot.

Showy could also describe Douzo’s *Blade Runner* atmosphere: sort of an intergalactic lounge/restaurant-cum-nightclub. Big-box light fixtures hover over the very large room like spaceships; floor-to-ceiling drapes block out reality at the streetside windows. The dining room is divided; the lower level has dimmer lighting and fellow eaters a bit too close (unless you enjoy comparing dishes, as we did, with knowledgeable neighbors). The smaller sushi bar along one wall seems more inviting; better still are cozy booths

and tables near the traditional bar area. Nowhere, unfortunately, can one escape the pulsating techno/hypno-pop that confusingly conjures a nightclub scene. Judging from the convivial crowd of mostly well-heeled but nondescript professionals, this may well be what’s popular now at the dinner hour. We like conversation.

But back to the food. Some have said Douzo’s sushi is among the best in Boston. We’d agree. The fish was fresh and of the highest quality. The prized yellowtail collar, *hamachi kama* (\$10.75), easy to overcook, was tenderly grilled. Beef *negima* (\$9) presented thinly sliced meat rolled around juicy asparagus and scallions. A cold seafood salad (\$8) with rich, shredded scallops, crab meat, and crunchy cucumber had a delectable spicy drizzle on top. If eel appeals, the Dragon Roll (\$13.95) offers it with fried sweet potato, avocado, and *unagi* sauce. The tempura was as delicate as a butterfly’s wing, especially the eggplant (\$2)—not easy to accomplish, given that veggie’s spongy texture.

Tempura’d, too, were the sliced dessert bananas (\$8), served in the shape of a flower and topped with walnuts next to a



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DOUZO

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Open for lunch and dinner.
Reservations recommended.

bamboo leaf curved over vanilla ice cream. Like a creamy custard, they were the best dish of the night, but the unusual lychee sorbet (\$4) proved exquisite as well. ~N.P.B.