



TRAVELLER PARTNERSHIP

SAMBA IN THE SKY

High atop a soaring tower on the Palm Jumeirah, a blend of unexpected flavours awaits in a restaurant that has all of Dubai abuzz



How can Brazilian, Peruvian and Japanese cultures converge seamlessly in one dynamic space? Through a kinetic colour palette, spirited Latin-infused soundtrack, and world-class menu marrying South American and East Asian flavours, the iconic global restaurant brand SUSHISAMBA successfully channels three wildly disparate cultures in one visually arresting venue. After crisscrossing the globe from the US to the UK and beyond, all these elements now commingle in a striking new restaurant crowning the 51st story of the soaring Palm Tower – with panoramic 360-degree views of the Palm Jumeirah and the sparkling Dubai skyline unfolding below. The result? This is a recipe for the city's most hotly anticipated restaurant opening of the year.

While diners are sure to be dazzled by the sweeping views of the city glittering in every direction below – the Ain Dubai and Burj Al Arab are both on show – there are plenty of standout design details in the interiors to enchant their gaze as well. In the hands of the award-winning architectural firm ICRAVE, the vast, 1,115-square-metre expanse was deftly transformed into a study in colours and textures. Traversing the circular dining room is an immersive journey: guests pass a sinuous marble bar, lush foliage-clad walls, a bold, 3D-printed bamboo ceiling – inspired by Brazilian and Japanese architecture – and rich copper and wood detailing that adds depth and dimension to each nook. There are cosy enclaves designed with intimate catch-ups in mind and roomier settings perfect for larger gatherings, as well as a 14-seat dining room primed for privacy. Warm lighting and a sultry colour palette create a convivial atmosphere, while the open kitchen, which sets the stage for culinary theatrics, captivates diners from all angles.

The only thing more colourful than the décor might be the artfully presented dishes. Culinary director Kyungsoo

Moon – who earned his culinary cred at Tokyo's famed Tsukiji Fish Market, waking up every morning at 3 am for a deep-dive immersion into sushi culture at its roots – leads the kitchen, innovating with flavour profiles and classic fare in unconventional ways. While area farms supply the restaurant with organic produce, much of the fresh seafood is sourced directly from Japan.

The star of the diverse menu is the namesake Samba Dubai roll, an indulgent signature dish with lobster, mango, avocado and aji honey truffle, but other standbys abound: don't miss the Crispy Taquitos made with yellowtail, jalapeno

and coriander in a tantalising communion of sour and spicy notes; a bright Sea Bream Seviche that ignites the palate with green chilli, coriander and panca oil; Moqueca Mista, a heady Brazilian seafood stew of shrimp, seabass, squid, mussels and clams in coconut milk served over chimichurri rice; and Chilean Seabass Anticuchos steeped in a miso marinade. The menu also has subtle tributes to local sensibilities – think dashes of sumac added to seviche plates. End your meal on a sweet note with the Andagi, a Japanese take on doughnuts dusted with cinnamon powder and served with a generous scoop of black sesame ice cream and a drizzle of mango and raspberry purée.

But what truly sets SUSHISAMBA apart is the singular ambience the restaurant imparts – equal measures eclectic, high-energy, whimsical, sexy and sophisticated. A live DJ plays vibrant Latin music to get diners in the perfect frame of mind to enjoy the vibrant cuisine. "Listening to samba music, your shoulders are moving, it makes you happy," says Chef Moon. "The cooking procedure follows Japanese technique, with an emphasis on the South American flavours; it's like Carnival. There are three cultures in collaboration – it's not fine dining, but fun dining."

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Clockwise from top left: SUSHISAMBA Dubai's interiors are a study in colours and textures; diners can enjoy the action unfolding in the vast open kitchen at the heart of the restaurant; a reflection of the stunning view; the décor channels sleek design with colourful tropical touches.



For more information, visit sushisamba.com