

Sake Food Pairing tips from Beau Timken

Traditional sake pairings from Japanese pubs known as *izakayas* are mostly salty, savory dishes, such as pickled vegetables, grilled chicken skewers with soy sauce or salt, tempura and "rigid cuts" of seafood, like squid legs. It's more likely for a good sake to have some sweetness than a good wine (Riesling excepted), and a little sweetness is a good contrast for salty food. Miso, which also contains fermented rice, is a brilliant sake companion.

As with wine, acidity plays a big role. Most sakes have an acidity rating on the bottle that varies from about 0.7 to 2.0; higher numbers are generally more acidic. Timken recommends softer, lower-acidity sakes with clean, soft foods like sushi or sashimi, while the more acidic brews can stand up to meat and game.

Difficult matches for sake include tomato dishes, because of the acidity, and very spicy food, because of sake's delicacy as well as its alcohol level, slightly higher than most wines, which can clash with the heat in the food.

Also as with wine, body is important. Try lighter daiginjos with starters and for sipping, ginjos with appetizers and junmais with more robust main courses

Mushroom dishes are a natural match for junmai and/or yamahai sakes because both food and drink have earthiness and complexity.

*Read the full article here: http://articles.sfgate.com/2008-09-05/wine/17158280_1_sake-showdown-time-mission-district