

INDUSTRY WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF CONTEMPORARY INDUSTRY TRENDS



ANYONE FOR

... Sushi?

The importance of food when travelling should not be underestimated. It is an obligatory part of any trip - wherever you are and whoever you are with, you will have to eat. Food can result in some exceptional experiences, but for some people eating overseas can be anxiety-provoking, especially when the food offer is unfamiliar and the ability to communicate is limited.

Eating local food when travelling is a wonderful lens through which to explore different cultures. The shared dishes of a Chinese meal, for instance, exemplify the collectivist culture, and the foods available reflect historical and geographical influences. In this digest, **Professor Anita Eves** shares a little about her food experiences on a recent trip to Japan.

Have a great weekend!



EXPLORING A CULTURE THROUGH FOOD – A JOYFUL OR ANXIETY-INDUCING EXPERIENCE?

Professor Anita Eves

I am a devout foodie and generally neophilic (love trying new things). However, when presented with a menu entirely in Japanese (and why shouldn't it be?), and staff who spoke little to no English (why should they?) things became a little worrying. Despite being pretty liberal in my food choices, there are things I find challenging that were quite likely to be on menus – chicken gizzard and cartilage being a couple of examples. Google translate sometimes helped but didn't cope very well, especially with the hand-written menus found in small restaurants. Translations included 'don't care' and 'fried vegetables with strange things', which left me none-the-wiser. Much pointing and miming of body parts helped and created a sense of camaraderie with the locals.

To get the best from travel-related food experiences, you do need to be a bit brave – following queues to find restaurants popular with locals or trying dishes in food markets – that's all part of the fun and can lead to some unexpected pleasures. Favourites were curry rice (all-time favourite), super-fresh sushi or sashimi, and chicken heart yakitori (skewers), mainly eaten in

Izakayas (bars with food, popular with businessmen after work), tiny restaurants serving largely one type of dish or food markets. Seeking out regional specialities offers insights into local tradition – octopus balls in Osaka or raw horse meat in Nagano, for instance. The latter may seem challenging, but feelings of disgust are likely to be mainly ideological. For me the biggest risk is disliking something. Risk for others, however, could mean undermining moral values or allergic reactions when it proves difficult or impossible to ascertain what a dish contains. A vegetarian could easily come unstuck, as many ostensibly vegetable dishes ordered, arrived with a healthy amount of meat! Learning a few key words is advisable.

Of course, you can visit Michelin-starred restaurants or international chains, and travelling companions may well limit your choices. The heart of local cuisine and culture, however, is found in the streets, eating with the locals. Yes, there can be challenges, but the rewards can be great – if you can, give it a go!

*Mak A, Lumbers M & Eves A (2017) [The effects of food-related personality traits on tourist food consumption motivations](#). *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 22 (1), 1 - 20*

*Pham L, Eves A & Wang L (2023) [Understanding tourists' food consumption emotions in street food experiences](#). *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 54, 392 – 403*



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