

Toriyasu Izakaya

Toriyasu is an izakaya specializing primarily in yakitori. They also have a huge menu that includes numerous other types of food such as chirashi, udon, chicken shabu shabu, and even chicken chanko nabe, among other foods and specialties.

Izakayas tend to have a very casual atmosphere that's perfect for grabbing some post-work drinks and grilled-to-order food with your friends and co-workers. Toriyasu is no exception. You will receive a warm welcome upon entering and instantly feel at home.

There's a nice counter seating area where you can watch the chef work as well as various tables if you need more space or come with a larger group.

Most people worldwide are familiar with sushi, ramen, and udon, but have yet to experience the beauty that is yakitori. Although yaki-tori technically means grilled chicken, and some traditional places only serve chicken, it also refers to any grilled skewered meats including pork and beef. In fact, you can even get grilled vegetables.

At Toriyasu, yakitori is prepared by putting 2-4 bite-size pieces of meat on a wooden skewer and cooking them over hot coals (binchotan). It's a simple concept that's been taken and perfected for the savory delight of the diner.

Toriyasu does not have an English menu, nor do they speak a lot of English, but the chef is a very friendly guy as are the rest of the staff and they will do their best to accommodate you. You can always just point to a part of your body to show them what part of the chicken you want to eat, and they'll know what you mean. However, that could be a bit awkward if you're a fan of chicken tail. Maybe for that, you should learn the name. It's called "bonjiri" and they do it very well.

You will be asked if you want shio (salt) or tare (sauce). I always go for shio and that's what I'd recommend, but if you want a teriyaki sauce type of flavor, then choose tare. Also, certain types of yakitori lend themselves to tare. Tskune (chicken meatball) in particular, is excellent with tare. You also need to specify how many of each kind of skewer you want. I generally get one of each so I can have more variety.

In addition to thigh, breast, and wing, every part of the chicken is used, including parts many westerners may not be accustomed to eating: skin, heart, liver, chicken tail, gizzard, cartilage, etc.

I recommend being brave and trying a variety of things. I used to think bonjiri (chicken tail) was unpalatable until I had some at a great yakitori place and now, I'm hooked.

I personally think you can't lose with negima, hatsu, momo, kawakushi, tsukune, asparabekon, and, of course, bonjiri (chicken tail).

Toriyasu has some other specialties including tori sushi (chicken sushi), chicken nanban, Nagoya Cochin chicken, and kawakushi (chicken skin that is skewered and deep-fried – unbelievably delicious!).

Their lunch sets are quite affordable. For example, you can get a maguro (tuna) chirashi bowl with a smaller bowl of udon noodles and half of a large bottle of beer for about 1000 yen or approx. \$8.00 USD.

If you're staying in Nagoya for a while and intend to come back multiple times, you can follow the Japanese tradition of buying your own bottle of sake from the establishment and having them keep it for you.

Toriyasu is open for lunch and dinner. Their hours are:

Lunch: 11:30 am-1:30 pm every day; Dinner: 5pm-midnight except on Thursday when they are closed.

It is less than a 3-minute walk from Nakamura Koen Station and well worth the adventure.

<http://www.toriyasu-nagoya.com/>