



There are a number of good sushi restaurants around Abu Dhabi; the likes of Wasabi and Benihana create some stiff competition. Sho Cho needs to fight hard to pull in the punters. Still, it's been open for just over a year and the slightly worn furniture has obviously seen many customers.

The decor has a fun feel to it; outside beyond the terrace seating lie blue waters and a few yachts, and a marine theme is echoed inside – three round screens with floating jellyfish on one of the walls (they're not real, but they are pretty convincing.) Despite the look of a casual diner/school cafeteria – the wheels on the bottom of the table are slightly quirky – the prices suggest mid-range dining.

The most appetising of three courses happens to be the appetisers. Soft-shell crab spring rolls with a wasabi mayonnaise and simple seared salmon do the trick nicely. The spring rolls are grilled, rather than deep fried, making them flavoursome rather than greasy; the salmon is accompanied by simple, traditional Japanese flavours, ginger and soy sauce.

For the main course, the Sho-Cho Lounge Regular comprises sashimi, sushi and maki staples – great for sharing and pleasant enough, though the sushi fillings aren't especially original. The mushroom salad is a large pile of sautéed mushrooms, cupped into a large portion of red lettuce.

Dessert is again up to scratch without hitting the heights. The red bean ice-cream is a slightly acquired taste, but an interesting one. Green tea ice cream is certainly the safer choice, and a good one.

Service is impeccable and the location is really very nice. But a lack of creativity and the casual dining vibe set against more formal prices make for a mixed reception. When the lights are low and the restaurant busier, an evening out would be quite pleasant; but we went for lunch, and in daylight Sho Cho does not show itself at its best.

What? Sho Cho

Where? Souk Qaryat Al Beri, Between the Bridges

Cost: AED 430 including soft drinks (excluding service charges)

Why? Quick service and the likelihood that the restaurant is livelier and nicer-looking in the evening – plus the view is pretty good

Why not? For standard sushi, it's rather pricey for what you get

We say: Five out of ten

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