

## Food with a flourish



Benihana at the Beach Rotana styles itself as a contemporary American-Japanese eatery and offers a wide variety of sushi, sashimi and makimono – but the only way to get the full Benihana experience is at the teppanyaki station. A slick, culinary floorshow is the essence of teppanyaki (and of Benihana); a meal here is much more than food, it's a performance. And a tantalising performance at that.

Before the main event commences, we are each presented with a delicious bowl of clear onion soup and a tasty green salad, topped with one of the nicest dressings we've had for a long time – a subtle mix of ginger and peanut. With appetites suitably whetted, we prepare ourselves for the main course and the start of the theatre.

We have opted to try both the Benihana Imperial and the Wagyu Tenderloin Teppanyaki. The presentation is done with flair; flashing knives move at blinding speed as the red-capped actor/chef chats with customers, deftly flips a titbit from knifepoint to the diner's plate, and performs cool tricks with eggs, salt cellars and bowls of rice.

The teppanyaki does not represent the cheapest option, but you certainly get plenty for your money – the food just seems to keep on coming. Juicy prawns seasoned with a squeeze of lemon are followed by tender, flaky hamour and then succulent chunks of chicken. The tenderloin steak served as part of the Imperial option falls a little short of the mark; but maybe that is just in comparison to the wagyu, which literally melts in the mouth.

The only dark spot of an otherwise entertaining and enjoyable meal was the dessert, which sadly was disappointing. But overall, the Benihana experience is relaxed, enjoyable and, most of all, great fun.

**What?** Benihana

**Where?** Beach Rotana

**Cost:** Average price for teppanyaki plus dessert AED 200 per person

**Why:** Reasonable food with great entertainment value

**Why not:** More suited to a meal with mates, not so good for a first date

**We say:** Who knew food could be so much fun!

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