

A Cut Above

The precise slicing and dicing of Kampachi EQ's *kappou* dining experience makes for an entertaining bespoke meal that retains its sense of refinement.





Kampachi sources its ingredients from Japan.

A CERTAIN CALMNESS settles over the long, elegant dining counter of fine-grained wood as chef Yusuke Ishigami begins preparations for the first of our seven-course *kappou* menu (from RM500 per person) at Kampachi EQ. Knives are laid out and sharpened, a pot of fish head stock bubbles on a hob and a log of bamboo charcoal salt waits to be grated as we prepare for action to commence.

In theory, every diner who heads to the newly relaunched EQ hotel to try Kampachi's *kappou* dining experience (which, in Japanese, translates to 'cut' and 'cook') should have their appetites already whetted with anticipation. This is not a spur-of-the-moment meal, but one that's carefully crafted and thought out by chef Ishigami, given that Kampachi EQ requires reservations for *kappou* dining to be made at least two days in advance.

The result is similar to a bespoke suit or a custom-made shoe, in the sense that every course – be it sashimi, tempura or dessert – is sourced, created and cooked with you in mind, right in front of you. It goes without saying that you're offered the best of the seasonal ingredients available, too: for the appetiser, plump, sweet Amara tomatoes served with a delicate sprinkling of black salt. The soup that follows is a



The Hinoki Wood sushi counter takes the sushi omakase experience to the next level.

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clear, pure broth of spring sea bream with slivers of yuzu floating within it. Later on, *chiayu* sweet fish (caught in their infancy before they grow too large to be eaten whole) are deep-fried to perfection, sprinkled with Japanese lime and mountain pepper, and served on rice paper patterned with the season's flowers. There are, of course, generous servings of deftly sliced sashimi and sushi, ranging from juicy tuna belly to the simple flesh of a dried gourd, along with cubed Wagyu beef that's grilled on the spot.

What makes this far more exciting than the standard omakase experience is that it places you (and seven other guests, if you so choose) at the epicentre of the action. It puts aside any showy demonstrations, making it an intimate and engaging experience for those who can't get enough of Japanese cuisine – so much so that they can delve as deeply into the art of *kappou* as they please.

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