

Food

FOOD NOTES

Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival to offer bento boxes and culinary events

By Craig Takeuchi on February 24th, 2017 at 12:38 PM



While we're preparing for the possibility of more snow to fall upon the city, a beautiful snowfall of a different kind is also anticipated in the near future.



The city is gearing up to celebrate the arrival of cherry blossoms, taking its cue from the Japanese tradition of *hanami*, or the appreciation of the fleeting floral splendour.

The **Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival**, presented by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, will be held from March 30 to April 23.

The month-long celebration will offer numerous events to attend and participate in, including a Cherry Jam downtown concert, workshops, an artist exhibition, a cycling tour, a haiku invitational, and more.

Of course, there will also be a number of culinary-related events as well.

Here's one for picnic fans to note on your calendars. The **Big Picnic** will be held on April 1 (no joke) from 12 to 3 p.m. at Queen Elizabeth Park (at West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Cambie Street).

Cocktails and Canapés has created two cherry blossom bento boxes that will be available online pre-ordering on March 1. The lunch boxes will be delivered to picnic sites at Vancouver parks and green spaces from March 30 to April 23.

Both bento boxes are \$20 (plus tax) and include a salad (red and green kale, buckwheat soba noodles, lemongrass cabbage, and grilled zucchini with peanut dressing) and a rose-petal white chocolate square.

The Blossom Bliss bento contains a sandwich with *furikake* (dry seasoning) chicken breast with miso-marinated slaw, pickled cucumber, sriracha, and Japanese mayonnaise on a soft egg baguette) and *temari* sushi (two sockeye salmon sushi balls with cream cheese centre, *togarashi* [chili pepper] mayonnaise, mustard microgreens, and banana leaf).



Blossom Bliss bento box

The vegetarian and gluten-free Sakura V bento offers a rice-paper roll (lemongrass cabbage, pickled daikon, red and yellow peppers, furikake-spiced tofu noodles, cilantro, and edible flowers) and *temari* sushi (two sockeye salmon sushi balls with *oshinko* [pickled radish], sweet soy sauce, *togarashi*, radish, and lime zest).



Sakura V bento box

Optional add-ons include handmade toasted black and white sesame caramel corn served in take-out boxes (\$5) and a matcha cherry blossom shake (\$4).

More information on ordering details will be available on March 1.



A folded Petal Mat

**Petal Mats** will also be available for purchase. Like origami, these ingenious made-in-Vancouver geometric tarps unfold from a triangle into a diamond shape (big enough for two people) that can be configured to interlock with other petal mats to suit your needs.



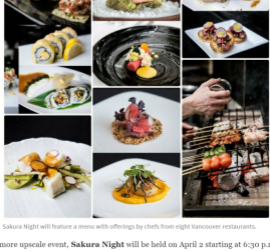
An unfolded Petal Mat

Prices are \$20.74 for one or \$36.07 for two.



Several Petal Mats connected together

Another food-related event will be the **Sakura Day Japan Fair** being held on April 8 (11 a.m. to 7 p.m.) and 9 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.) at VanDusen Botanical Garden (5251 Oak Street). In addition to haiku readings, arts and crafts demonstrations, and a lantern procession, there will also be Japanese festival food, premium sake sampling, culinary demonstrations, and more.



Sakura Night will feature a menu with offerings by chefs from eight Vancouver restaurants.

For a more upscale event, **Sakura Night** will be held on April 2 starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Stanley Park Pavilion (610 Pipeline Road).

The evening will feature eight local restaurants contributing to a menu filled with Asian fusion dishes.

Chefs will include Ancora's Ricardo Valverde, Bella Gelateria's James Coleridge, Benkei Ramen's Taka Omi, Hapa Izakaya's Takayuki Sato, Masayoshi's Masayoshi Baba, Prestons' Justin Paakkunainen, Zakkushi's Ryu Yamamura, and Zen's Nobu Ochi.

Urbanity will also present the Oleana spring collection at the event.

**Tickets** are \$150 (plus tax, with a charitable tax receipt issued).

For full details on these events plus more about the festival, visit the **VCBF website**.

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