



HIROSHIMA

DINING OUT

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WHEN Japanese offer recommendations on what to do and where to visit while in Hiroshima City, most people will respond with, “Hiroshima? Great food! It is a city famous for oysters and *okonomiyaki*.” Oysters are raised in the nearby Seto Inland Sea, whereas okonomiyaki is a dish that must be tried to fully appreciate.

In downtown Hiroshima, one may find businesspeople rushing from one meeting to the next, or fans heading to see the Hiroshima Carp

baseball team at the nearby Mazda Zoom Zoom Stadium.

Taking the tram line to Hatchobori brings the traveler to the famous department store PARCO.

Behind PARCO is a building by the name of “Okonomiyaki Kyowakoku Hiroshima Mura” that contains okonomiyaki outlets grouped together.

We paid a visit to “Jigoya” on the 3rd floor of Okonomiyaki Kyowakoku. Outside the entrance, a large red lantern is hung with the name of the restaurant written in *kanji*, indicating that this is an okonomiyaki shop. Once inside, the

restaurant features a large counter that also serves as a grill where chefs prepare their dishes in front of their customers. Hiroshima Carp memorabilia hangs on the walls, since Hiroshima is also a very large baseball town and their fans like to gather here for evening matches and beers.

Skilled chefs can fry up an okonomiyaki meal in under ten minutes with the customer watching on. Okonomiyaki is not unlike a pancake or burrito that is prepared with an assortment of batter, vegetables, meat, eggs and noodle. It is also



served with mayonnaise and sweet sauces that add flavor to this layered dish. The chef cooks the okonomiyaki on a *teppan*, or hot plate, that is built into the table where the diners eat. Hiroshima has its own version of okonomiyaki that differs from those made in Tokyo or Osaka, and essentially it consists of more toppings and less batter.

Another restaurant worth visiting is a cozy bistro called Kaki Tei (“oyster conclave”), located in Inarimachi on the banks of the Kyobashi River. Its quiet and intimate terrace is furnished with wooden chairs, flowers and colorful lights that add atmosphere to this riverside

location. Established in 2005, Kaki Tei serves the many foreign guests who happened to visit the city while also offering a romantic environment for those who may appreciate its European decor and ambiance.

Of course, the main feature on the menu are oysters that are prepared in many variations, including “Salade de oyster et beef with vino bianco” or “Mini filet beef of matsuzaka steak with oyster sauce vino rosso.”

Both restaurants are good alternatives to the crowded fast-food outlets located in the city center. You can enjoy flavorful Hiroshima dishes in an environment that is far more

memorable and stylish. Eating out in Hiroshima can be expensive, but affordable options exist if one knows where to look. Follow your nose and you may be pleasantly surprised. *Bon Appétit!* **V**

