



Entrance of Benihana

Time for Japanese at Benihana

Benihana Chef

The chefs at Benihana perform a variety of tricks that include your food as they cook it

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Benihana which means “Red Flower” has finally arrived in the capital. At the heart of the Benihana experience is the teppanyaki table, around which guests gather and enjoy a meal expertly prepared and cooked to perfection on a steel grill, right before their eyes — by a chef who is as much entertainer as culinary master. The rich history of Benihana of Tokyo starts with the Aoki family in Japan. Yunosuke and Katsu ran a successful sweets shop specializing in desserts during the war, and later on the shop turned into a full service restaurant. This restaurant would go on to be named Benihana, after a red flower Yunosuke saw among the rubble and debris found in Tokyo from the devastation of World War II.

History

Rocky's concept for Benihana emerged from combining Japanese home cooking with



the notion that customers should be able to interact with their chef. Not long after opening, Rocky's father visited the restaurant and suggested that the chefs should entertain and tell jokes while cooking. Despite Benihana's uniqueness, business was bad. Just to keep the business afloat, Rocky had to ask his mother for help who was now living in New York and waiting tables at a Japanese

restaurant near Columbia University.

Rocky understood the importance of publicity, and Rocky took it upon himself to be Benihana's biggest promoter. In doing so, six months after opening the doors to Benihana, he visited Clementine Paddleford, a tough food critic who had great popularity among readers of the New York Herald Tribune. She went on to write a rave review of Benihana, detailing her delightful dining experience and the revolutionary restaurant concept.

Rocky knew Benihana's potential all along, and with Paddleford's review, the restaurant instantly became a New York hot spot. With only four tables, there were crowds of people willing to wait in order to experience Benihana. The restaurant now profitable, Rocky sought out to open a new location. In 1966, still in Manhattan and still on 56th Street, just three blocks east, Benihana opened its second location that allowed a much bigger dining crowd. To help alleviate the crowds from Benihana West, Rocky purchased a Rolls Royce to shuttle customers to the bigger Benihana East.

From thereon, Benihana opened restaurants