

Thinking of raw fish and family

I got to sit down and enjoy some sushi with my oldest daughter and her husband last weekend. It was part of a great weekend. But this is about the raw fish.

Many years ago, when my oldest was the only child, our little family would go to a Japanese restaurant at least 1 time per month. It was there I first tried Sushi with my wife. As we grew to know the owners, they would let our little girl play with their daughter if the restaurant wasn't that busy. I'm not sure what they fed her, but she was fed, and it never turned up on our bill. I'm wondering if she didn't have sushi way back then. Unfortunately, that little Japanese restaurant closed, and there was not another place to get Sushi in the area for many years. We moved to the country and our choice were cut back even further. I went without sushi for a long time. While Japanese food was one of my wife's favorites, the raw fish wasn't on her top ten. I never pushed the matter, since there is other excellent food that we both enjoyed.

Fast forward a few years, and we are celebrating my oldest's birthday. As was our custom, the birthday celebrant got to choose the restaurant. The younger sisters were not thrilled with the choice of restaurants, but the father was. I got to experience Sushi again. It seemed so much better than the last time I had it. Had my tastes changed, or was the preparation better? Or had time just dulled my memory? I'm not sure, but since that day, I've held Sushi as a special treat when having a meal.

As with the first time, and all other times I've had Sushi, the meal is more than just a time to eat food. Sushi seems to be a shared experience more than most meals. You try some of this, and a little of that. You find things you really enjoy

and then some thing you may not care for as much. As time goes by, you learn what you like, and skip things you don't. But it seems there is always room for something you don't remember having before.

Different places serve different things. Sushi, like most dishes, varies from place to place. More than that it seems to vary from visit to visit more than most foods. Is it the freshness of the fish? The time of year it was caught? The way it was cut? I'm not sure what influences all of the variance but it seems real to me.

And finally it is sharing with family. Most of my daughters will still make a face or two if we invite them for sushi. They either don't like fish at all, or would prefer it warm. □ But with my eldest and her husband, the experience is one I enjoy. Good natured fighting over that last bit of eel. Who took the most ginger? Trying to get my daughter to try the spicy roll. And, for some reason, always wanting just one more piece.

Family, friends, food and sharing these things make life a joy.