



BY AISLYN GREENE | AFAR Editor

Mar 24, 2015

## 5 WAYS TO DO TOKYO LIKE A CHEF

San Francisco-based [Quince](#) chef Michael Tusk is the latest in a line of chefs searching for culinary nirvana in Japan. And while, yes, the [Noma pop-up](#) was a big reason for his recent trip, Tokyo's ubiquitous sushi bars and trove of beautiful ceramics were almost a bigger draw, he says. His top four meals—plus how his travels will feed *you* in 2015.

**Tempura Matsu:** "It's 20 or 30 minutes outside of Tokyo in Kyoto. I went there twice because it was so good. Two days apart, they had two entirely different menus and great raw products, like yellowtail grilled on *binchotan*, or Japanese charcoal (pictured above). You eat at a counter, where you can watch different stations in action and they serve everything on these beautiful service pieces that are 100 to 200 years old. There were tons of surprises too, like this sake pourer that looked like a piece of bamboo. They chilled it ahead of time and then poured the sake into it."



**Narisawa:** "It is this amazing, comfortable restaurant with very creative food. It was very theatrical in the dining room—at one point, they made this bread called "Bread of the Forest 2010" right at the table. The bread was brought to us still rising and baked table side with black sugar and kumquat, then served with a delicious butter wrapped in moss. It's a two-Michelin star restaurant that really delivered in terms of flavors. I had some dishes there that I won't be forgetting for a very long time, like "Irabu" with sea snake and taro potato. It's a soup that they make with the essence of a snake."



**Daisin Harumi:** "I loved the chef at this sushi restaurant. He crafts all his own plates, handwrites all the menus, and created all the graphics in the restaurant. He even had his own sushi book translated into different languages. The sushi was delicious, especially his uni andebi (shrimp)."



**Butagumi:** "A tonkatsu restaurant. We had the most delicious winter tomatoes. I was skeptical at first but it could have been one of the best tomatoes of my life. We tried four types of pork tonkatsu."

**And back in San Francisco:** "We were so inspired by the food and the ceramics and the glassware that we decided to do another pop-up series starting in October. We'll bring over some of these chefs, artists, bartenders, and glass blowers as part of the [Curate](#) 2015 series. For example, we'd like to bring over this glassblower from Kyoto for a show of her work. Basically, you'd have a meal, then meet the artist and tour this show where you can purchase stuff. This is a way to bring some of that craftsmanship here because not everyone can go to Kyoto."

Photos by [Michael Tusk](#)