



Wokou Ramen & Yakitori - San Diego, CA

It's already been a year since [Wokou Ramen & Yakitori](#) opened its doors in The Village at Pacific Highlands Ranch. Having a ramen spot in the northern area of San Diego meant residents didn't have to drive to Convoy or further south for a bowl of noodles! Our first visit was with friends during their busy grand opening and we returned recently for a Tuesday evening media visit. This business plaza has changed since the last time we visited! I felt like I had to drive in circles up several floors for a parking spot in their newer parking garage. The neighboring restaurant [Crudo by Pascal](#) was replaced by Casa Rustica too.





Wokou Ramen & Yakitori is a lovely space. Inside the roomy restaurant, there are these gorgeous signature artwork by artist España Garcia on the back and right side walls. There's also metalwork by Mike Dunn but I didn't get pictures at the time of our visit. The kitchen is visible from the entrance and there's a bar area in the middle of the dining area.



Outside, the patio has that picnic table feel along with the relaxing ambiance from the stringed lights. Joey, one of the owners, came out to greet us while Brian took care of us as the main server in our area.



Skirt Steak Skewer (\$7.50) - togarashi butter

After seeing skewers cooking over the fire, we knew it had to be part of our dinner! This skirt steak was cooked perfectly, with some nice char to the edges and lightly brushed on the outside with sultry marinade. There was some decent char to the edges which extended that meaty yum. This skirt steak is a must for our next visit!



Pork Belly Skewer (\$7.42) - plum salt, togarashi butter, pepper, yuzu

The Pork Belly skewer caught our eye on the menu as well. This kind is not the super fatty version so it's very pork-chop in texture to me, with thicker slices like [Gen Korean BBQ](#). I thought it was chewier on my piece but Dennis lucked out with a softer, more tender skewer. Perhaps not so easy to cook evenly on a stick? Thin slices of bell pepper split up the 3-4 pieces of pork belly on each skewer. The dipping sauce accompanying it was bright and quite in your face.



King Oyster Mushroom Skewer (\$5.57) - tsuyu yamaki soy, truffle oil

These thick cut mushroom skewers provided some meatless morsels for your mouth! The marinade on the mushrooms (which soaked down as plate juices) was a sweeter mirin like taste. They were an excellent option for non-meat eaters.



Chicken Karaage (\$6.50) - boneless fried chicken thighs, house-made honey mustard sauce

A common appetizer we try is the karaage, and Wokou's version was very lightly fried. The seasoning reminded me of what you'd find on Taiwanese popcorn chicken but without the crazy spice! I liked that indeed. In the middle was a sharp tasting dip, which Dennis happily tapped into but was too potently mustard for me. We easily finished off this moister chicken meat (sans dip for me).



Carnitas Bao Bao (\$6.50) - steamed bao bun, pork carnitas, sunomono, rock sugar, peanuts, jalapenos, cilantro, bbq sauce

This Carnitas Bao Bao is their take on the well-known Vietnamese/Chinese stuffed buns. The topping of crispy crumbles were a delightful texture to pair with the lightly seasoned shredded pork, which made it very meaty. I didn't realize it had jalapenos but luckily I spotted them before taking a huge bite! On Tuesdays they have a bao special where you can get three for around \$9.



Tonkotsu Ramen (\$11.50) - chasu pork, menma, green onion, nori, soft egg, toasted garlic, kikurage

Hello noodle pull! These days we have to do this every time we try ramen! The broth was simmered for hours and it wasn't too milky or fatty or rich. The taste was clean and slightly oily on first bite and made for a comforting slurp. The plentiful thinner ramen noodles had good bite to them. The meat came in two pieces but was not as tender as other chashu we've had. It seemed like cooked pork belly sliced from the fat cap down and grilled first to give it that color. Overall it was fit the bill for a good ramen but isn't our favorite.



Wokou Fried Rice (\$10.50) - beef, chicken, bacon, mixed vegetables, lime, furikake, fried egg

This was definitely not your traditional fried rice bowl. They hid some zucchini and eggplant into this dish plus it was the meatiest version we've ever had! Dennis mentioned his mouth was a little tired because we were chomping on so much meat with too little rice. The flavor of the pork was the strongest while the chicken meat was the most tender. I love eggs with my dinner and this one was yolky, spilling into the slightly sticky, wetter rice. It's not the oily, separated kind you'd typically find at a Chinese restaurant. Surprisingly, the next day leftovers tasted even better and I no longer thought it needed additional rice. Go figure!



We didn't have drinks this time but here's one from our opening weekend visit last year. Beautifully presented but I have no idea what's in it! We'll have to try a cocktail on our next visit to remind us! They have a full liquor license which most ramen spots don't have.



Did anyone notice the odd prices? 7.42, 5.57, etc? I'm guessing that allows them to round up to the next dollar with tax. Then again, half the items don't fit this pattern so who knows? Prices aside, we think it's a great place to meet up with friends for casual eats and drinks. As the weather cools, Wokou Ramen & Yakitori will fill up with additional comfort-food seeking souls. The business is expanding with a new location in Pacific Beach later this year too so be sure to check them out!

Disclaimer: We were invited to dine here and the food was complimentary. We were not otherwise compensated and all opinions stated are my own.

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<http://wokouramen.com/>