

To Whom It May Concern:

Hello. My name is Jamie Sparks, and I am a 4th grade teacher at Saint Clare Catholic School in O'Fallon, IL. My students recently learned about the writing process and were assigned a persuasive essay. Students were to persuade readers to go to their favorite restaurant. Enclosed you will find a copy of an essay written about your restaurant. I hope you enjoy reading their essay as much as they enjoyed writing it!

The students are anxiously awaiting to hear back from you. If you cannot send a letter back, an e-mail would be appreciated.

Jocelyn Nichol #79

Do you like buffets? If you do your in Luck. You Should go Hokkaido because they have amazing food, wonderful service, and fancy atmosphere.

The food at Hokkaido is amazing! I always get the crispy, hot chicken served with a slice of creamy, chocolaty cookies and cream cake. When I get to the freezer there are tons and tons of different ice cream's. Some are chocolaty, creamy, or even fruity.

Hokkaido has wonderful service. When you get to Hokkaido they always greet you with a friendly, nice smile, They are always very polite. They always ask if you want some more water and they check on you every once and a while, you don't even have to worry about waiting for your food because you can just get up and serve yourself, If you forgot thats okay, because your waitress will kindly remind you.

The atmosphere at Hokkaido is super fancy.

If you have not even seen or heard Hokkaido you must go, As you can see, Hokkaido has amazing food, wonderfull service, and fancy atmosphere, Hokkaido is an amazing restaurant, I'll see you there!

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It looks as though 30 people came and cleaned the entire floor. Hanging down from the ceiling there are a bunch of beautiful lights shining down on you. The lights have interesting designs on them. If you are eating and you are bored just look up and you will find a few fancy, wide TVs.

If you have not even seen or heard Hokkaido you must go. As you can see, Hokkaido has amazing food, wonderful service, and fancy atmosphere. Hokkaido is an amazing restaurant. I'll see you there!

* MATTER OF TASTE | A SAMPLING OF METRO-EAST CUISINE



Choice of buns: Rice bun, BBQ pork bun, coconut bun, mashed bean bun, sticky rice chicken bun, and wonton



Hibachi grill chef Daniel Gonzales stir-fries vegetables and meat or shrimp



DERIK HOLTSMANN/News-Democrat

Dragon rolls made with salmon and sticky rice are one of the sushi offerings.



Mongolian pork is a mix of pork and vegetables stir-fried in a spicy brown sauce.



A customer dips a marshmallow into Hokkaido's chocolate fountain.

Choices abound at Hokkaido's big buffet

BY TERI MADDOX
News-Democrat

The choices seem endless at Hokkaido Buffet and Grill in Swansea. Customers can pick their own ingredients for a Japanese hibachi stir-fry, try Cantonese or Hunan-style Chinese dishes, visit the sushi bar or go for cooked seafood, including jumbo peel-and-eat shrimp.

The buffet also offers fried chicken, pizza and other American favorites, as well as chocolate-chip cookies, Rice Krispie treats and homemade cheesecake.

"Some people don't like Chinese, Japanese, and we want the whole family to come," said manager Ki Yim, 37, of Fairview Heights.

Hokkaido (hoh-KEYE-doh) is named after the second largest island in Japan.

It opened four months ago in the old Ryan's building. The owners also have a location in Florissant, Mo.

The new place seats more than 300 people in the main dining room and three party rooms. Buses are welcome, as the parking lot also is huge.

Customers Debra Williams and Sharon Vence recently dined on pineapple and Indian teriyaki, a seafood combo and cheese spinach bake.

They topped off the meal with fresh fruit and marshmallows dipped in a chocolate fountain.

"I like the atmosphere," said Debra, 57, of East St. Louis. "It's peaceful. It's pretty. It's a little exotic, and it's clean. I like the variety. The food is fresh, and it's good."

The all-you-can-eat buffet costs \$7.99 for lunch on weekdays, \$10.99 for dinner Mondays through Thursdays and \$11.99



after 4 p.m. Fridays and all day Saturdays and Sundays.

Sandra Hobbs and her husband, Eugene, eat at Hokkaido almost every week, sometimes twice a week.

On their last visit, they feasted on seafood casserole, seafood salad, shrimp, egg noodles, beef and broccoli, fried rice and vanilla ice cream.

"I don't like sushi, but I like all their other dishes," said Sandra, 70, of Cahokia. "(The restaurant is) clean, very clean. You don't have to wait for service. We've brought our daughter and our grandkids here, and the waitresses are so sweet."

Ki immigrated to the United States from Hong Kong at 17 and has worked in the restaurant business ever since. He owned a

large buffet in Arizona for 10 years.

Ki moved to Fairview Heights from California two months ago with his wife and two children to take over Hokkaido. He knew one of the owners, Maoli Dong, while living in China.

Ki emphasizes that the restaurant uses fresh ingredients and no MSG, a common food additive that some people believe is unhealthy.

"We have a unique birthday celebration, Japanese-style," he said. "When you come to work here, you have to learn a Japanese song. The servers encourage (the birthday person) to dance with them. Most people dance because they're happy, but some people don't. They're shy."



At a glance

What: Hokkaido Buffet and Grill

Where: 4580 N. Illinois in Swansea

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Fridays through Sundays

Handicap-accessible: Yes

Party rooms: Yes

Carry-outs: Yes

Catering: Yes

Information: Call 416-2077 or visit <http://hokkaidousa.com>

Working on a great costume?



WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BE THIS YEAR? Are you pairing up with a friend to go as political candidates? Have you designed a costume for you and your favorite four-legged friend? Are you Batman or Spiderman or Lady Gaga? Are you a witch or a wizard? Maybe it's your children who will get the benefit of your creativity. Do you have the cutest pumpkin this side of the patch?

Let us know. We'd like to talk to you and see your costume. Who knows? Maybe it will inspire some undecided witches, ghosts and goblins.

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