

Japanese gourmet hall opens largest dining space at Changi Airport

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An artist's impression of Japanese gourmet hall SORA, which opens at Changi Airport Terminal 2 on November 14

SORA, a Japanese gourmet food hall, is opening its doors at Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 2 on November 14.

The 7,760 square feet space, which seats about 300 diners, is the largest restaurant across the four terminals in Changi Airport.

SORA is located on Level 3 and houses six Japanese restaurant brands that serve food including ramen, sashimi, okonomiyaki and Nippon-inspired desserts and beverages.

SORA, which means sky in Japanese, marks the first time that ANA Trading – the trading arm of Japanese airline company, All Nippon Airways – has operated a food hall outside of Japan.

Kazuhiro Nakao, Project Director, Retail Business Development of ANA Trading and Director of SG Retail Partners Pte Ltd, said: “This is part of the company’s strategy to expand its business and reach in the South East Asia region. Our very first retail project was Eat At Seven at Suntec City [Singapore]. Following the success of the Japanese dining concept, we are excited to launch Japan Gourmet Hall

SORA at one of the best airports in the world.”

James Fong, Vice President of Landside Concessions at Changi Airport Group (CAG), added: "CAG is always on the lookout for innovative and new dining concepts to excite passengers and visitors of Changi Airport. Combining two concessions into one provides a much larger space for the tenant to present their unique dining concept and food offerings through a restaurants-within-a restaurant setting.

“We are pleased that ANA Trading has chosen Changi Airport as the world’s first airport outside Japan to launch SORA, bringing together the best of Japanese cuisine, ambience and service.”

Of the six restaurants in SORA, two of them are new-to-market brands: Tsuruhashi Fugetsu and Japoli Kitchen.

Making its overseas debut in Singapore, Tsuruhashi Fugetsu is a renowned okonomiyaki chain that hails from Osaka. Available from US\$13 onwards, its signature Japanese savory pancakes are made with fresh cabbage, yakisoba (fried noodles) and an assortment of battered meat and seafood, before being grilled and covered in Worcestershire sauce and mayonnaise and topped with bonito flakes.

Japoli Kitchen offers Italian dishes infused with Japanese touches from US\$10.80. Menu highlights include Bolognese Pasta, Porcini Risotto, and freshly-made pizzas. The brand uses fresh pasta and flour specially imported from Japan.

Rounding out the dining offerings at SORA are other Japanese restaurants such as Menya Takeichi, which is lauded as Tokyo’s top chicken ramen chain. Its collagen-rich Chicken Paitan broth ramen dishes are available from US\$13.90. This is the brand’s 100th outlet worldwide.



Kuro Maguro, which is operated by the number one Japanese fish wholesaler, is offering meshi (rice dishes) with kaisen (seafood) and torobutsu (tuna) that are flown daily from Japan. Prices start from US\$18.



Tendon Kohaku specializes in Edomae-style tendon, in which Hokkaido rice is adorned with crisp tempura that are drizzled in tendon sauce. Prices start from US\$16.60.

Adding Korean flavors is Tokyo Sundubu, Japanese's largest restaurant chain that serves Korean stew rich in collagen.

Sundubu Jjigae serves hand-made tofu, vegetables and ingredients such as chicken, beef, asari (sake-steamed) clams and shrimps, available from US\$15.

SORA Bar offers desserts and beverages. On the menu are desserts such as Hokkaido milk ice cream, sake and cocktails including Singapore Sling and Mojito.

Diners can order food from any of the restaurants and bar and sit at the shared seating area in the middle of the food hall.

Modeled after airline lounges, SORA boasts comfortable booth and tatami seating options. For tatami seating, diners can immerse in Japanese dining etiquette by taking off their shoes before dining.

Seating options also come with features such as tables fitted with charging points for mobile electronic devices and an interactive Kids Corner complete with a playground and a television screen.

Added Nakao: “We are also exploring collaborations with leading Japanese technology companies to introduce cutting-edge technology features at SORA in the near future to create unique and memorable experiences for the customers. For instance, Virtual Reality contents are being considered for future business expansion, allowing diners to enjoy the magnificent scenery of Japan landscape while dining at the food hall.”

SORA’s contemporary chic interiors are heavily steeped in Japanese influences. The decor boasts intricate exquisite Japanese craftsmanship such as the Kumiki (Japanese woodcraft) and kumiko (lattice-like timbre trellis) that embellish the counter tables. Adorning the walls are murals of bonsai and pine trees that are hand-painted in a style reminiscent of Japanese art history.