



Utsunomiya at his restaurant East Side King in Austin, Texas

2

No lobsters were harmed in the making of this thermidor

A meat-eating chef tests out animal-free “seafood”

As the popularity of vegan cuisine continues to rise, more and more food producers are offering alternatives to conventional seafood. Texas-based Banyan Foods makes vegan calamari, while New York’s Good Catch is creating plant-based crab cakes. Here, chef Motoyasu Utsunomiya, co-owner of East Side King and Thai-Kun (and a non-vegan), rates a few notable examples of the trend.



All Vegetarian Inc.

Vegan Shrimp

“It tastes like shrimp,” Utsunomiya said of the tempura-ed facsimile. His second reaction: “This is vegan shrimp? Really?” The texture, aroma and taste were on point.



Cavi-Art Orange Red and Black

Vegan Caviar

Utsunomiya thought the mock fish eggs were roe, surprised it wasn’t authentic. “Vegan food was not like this ten years ago.”



Ocean Hugger Foods Ahimi

Tuna

As sashimi, poke and spicy tuna, Utsunomiya found it had the right texture, but not the smell or the flavor. “It didn’t taste like tuna.”

3

AUSTRALIAN CUISINE IS HOPPING

To find authentic Aussie grub, you have to get beyond national restaurant chains founded in Tampa. Here’s where you can really “bog in” (chow down) in the U.S. on Australia Day (January 26)



FAIRY BREAD

Roo Coffee, Los Angeles

These traditional Aussie kid’s treats (left) get an upgrade as layers of mascarpone and melted butter hold mounds of colorful sprinkles in place on thick slices of sourdough.

facebook.com/roocoffee

VEGEMITE BISCUITS

Oz Restaurant & Bar, Arlington, VA

Oz swaps salt for Vegemite on their light and flakey southern-style biscuits, giving them a kick of umami. Still hungry? Try their emu wraps.

ozarlington.com

TIM TAM SUNDAE

The Australian, NYC

TANYC smashes beloved Tim Tams (malt chocolate biscuits layered with chocolate cream) and tops them with vanilla ice cream, whipped cream and chocolate sauce.

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