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TIME OUT SAYS ★★★★★

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Gone are the days of the gritty Lower East Side. Now, instead of bums on the Bowery, you're more likely to find charming little hideaways like the Japanese comfort food restaurant Bessou. The name loosely translates to 'home

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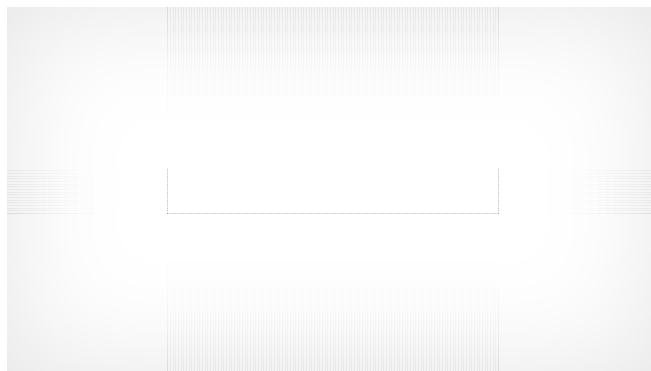
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(\$18), presented in a small glass pitcher. It will spark your appetite for the otsumami—homestyle Japanese bites. A popular pick was the charred eggplant caponata (\$8), a tiny casserole dish of diced eggplant in tama miso with walnuts and shaved mint. Use the tiny wooden fork to pile caponata on lovely, freshly-fried lotus root chips.

Try a selection from their rotating selection of fresh crudo du jour (MP), like four briny Maine oysters in a lemony ponzu sauce, with wakame seaweed, cucumber, and sesame seeds. It's bracing, cool, and tangy. The entrees are equally metered and delicate—even hearty dishes like their beef short rib kakuni (\$28). Like nothing else you'll ever find in a Japanese restaurant, the dish features a fork-tender rectangle of short rib served charcuterie-style, with heirloom carrots, chickpeas, a puck of roasted daikon, a smidgen of sauerkraut and a smear of spicy Chinese mustard. It comes with two tiny edamame-stuffed fishcakes, made fresh by Kyogoku's father. We paired this with the Inaniwa udon (\$24), an egg-shaped bowl of sesame udon, served with a lightly-fried nest of matchstick sweet potatoes, tempura shrimp, shiso leaf, and hen-of-the-woods mushrooms. Ask for a side of their special rayu chili oil, larded with burnt pork ends, for dipping. Desserts are usually perfunctory in Asian restaurants, but Bessou turns out a miso caramel ice cream (\$7) that's such an ideal pairing of salty and sweet, it makes one wonder why everyone doesn't churn it this way. And the Hojicha tea affogato (\$9) pairs a stoneware cruet of chestnut-brown tea and a mug of tea ice cream for one of the best pour-overs ever. Whether you're looking for your own home away from home, or just a satisfying Japanese alternative to sushi, Bessou is it.

BY TIME OUT COMMUNITY REVIEWER: WINNIE MCCROY

ADVERTISING



“BESSOU SAYS

Owner Maiko Kyogoku, created Bessou as a way to share her family's food traditions. Inspired by Kyogoku's mother's passionate home cooking, the menu is a modern take on everyday Japanese comfort food. Ingredients are responsibly sourced and prepared with care, with a menu that is seasonal and changing year round.

POSTED: THURSDAY NOVEMBER 3 2016

DETAILS

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Mon-Thu & Sun 5:30-11pm; Fri-Sat 5:30-11:30pm

Transport:

B,D,F,M to Broadway/Lafayette or 6 to Bleecker

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Average main course: \$24.

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