

Alive Mind CINEMA

presents

SUSHI: THE GLOBAL CATCH

A film by Mark Hall

US-Australia-Japan-Poland / 2011 / 75 min / Color / Dolby Digital / 1.78:1 / in English

An Alive Mind Cinema Release
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SYNOPSIS

Blue Fin Tuna is a valuable commodity that faces potential extinction due to the explosion in the popularity of sushi worldwide. Once a Japanese delicacy, today the consumption of sushi represents a four billion dollar industry. Is the current sushi trade sustainable? What can be done to ensure that the prized Blue Fin Tuna exists for future generations to come? This timely documentary poses important questions that all sushi lovers should give thought to before placing their next order of sushi.

CREW

Produced and Directed by
Mark Hall

Edited by
Susan Adair, A.C.E. And Catie Cacci

Composer
Brian Satterwhite

Featuring

Mamoru Sugiyama

Mike Sutton

Alistair Douglas

Casson Trenor

Hagen Stehr

Tyson Cole

PRODUCTION NOTES

How did sushi become a global cuisine?

What began as a simple but elegant food sold by Tokyo street vendors has developed into a worldwide phenomenon over the past 30 years. *Sushi: The Global Catch* is a powerful feature-length documentary shot over the course of two years that explores how sushi became a worldwide phenomenon. Beautiful raw pieces of fish and rice now appear from Warsaw to New York to high school football games in Texas. *Sushi: The Global Catch* asks the question, “Can the growth continue without consequence?” The film is a call to action that cannot be ignored.

The Heart of Sushi: Tokyo

At the center of the story of sushi is Tokyo, where Sugiyama, the owner and chef of the Michelin-starred sushi restaurant Sushiko, visits his favorite vendors daily and selects the tuna and other fish he will serve to his well-heeled customers. He trained for more than seven years to become an “itamae” or master sushi chef – and still puts his apprentices through rigorous tasks each day. Sushiko is a traditional sushi restaurant that has been in the family since 1884. Sugiyama focuses on quality and will not serve fish that are farmed. However, with the explosive growth of emerging sushi markets like China, wild fish are harder and harder to find.

The crew spent long nights filming the action at Tokyo's famed Tsukiji market to capture the activities that bring sushi to consumers worldwide. Getting up at 3 am to shoot hours of footage at the market, including the tuna auction, was the only way to recount the lives of those who sell fish for sushi to restaurants around the globe.

The process of catching, selling, distributing and preparing sushi for millions of people requires a complex global infrastructure. Part of that infrastructure was started by Japan Airlines (JAL) in the 1970s when the company needed a product that could be shipped back to Japan on its nearly empty 747 jumbo jets. *Sushi: The Global Catch* interviewed JAL's air cargo executive Akira Okazaki, who some consider to be the father of “global” sushi when he shipped tuna from New York to Tokyo in 1973. The film has the only known archival footage showing this breakthrough that now allows fish to be shipped worldwide by air to sushi restaurants far from Tokyo.

Explosive Growth of Sushi:

In Austin, Texas, *Sushi: The Global Catch* visits chef Tyson Cole, a sushi chef who has a unique “New American” style – incorporating fruit and other untraditional ingredients. Tyson was self-taught but has become a celebrity sushi chef, even making an appearance on Iron Chef America against Japanese master sushi chef Morimoto.

In San Francisco, Casson Trenor helped open the world's first “sustainable” sushi restaurant. A committed environmentalist and author, he advocates the total closure of threatened fisheries that supply the global sushi business with its raw materials. Casson's sushi restaurant, Tataki, has been voted one of the best in the Bay Area – in part due to its patron's love of the strict sustainable focus of its menu. Casson's messages of a total ban on certain fish for sushi, including farmed salmon, eel, blue-fin tuna or whatever the scarcity-of-the-day, is gaining traction among other sushi restaurants.

A Global Production

Production on *Sushi: The Global Catch* began in March 2008 with the first visit to Tokyo to film the auctions and other activities of Tsukiji fish market over a 10-day period. The crew was allowed into one of the of the Michelin-starred Sushiko restaurants, opened in the 1880s and home to master sushi chef Mamoru Sugiyama. This was the first time a film crew had been allowed into this temple of traditional sushi.

Footage was also filmed underwater at the tuna “ranches” off the coast of Australia as well as the “tuna lab” of Australian tycoon Hagen Stehr. Altogether, the crew shot hundreds of hours of footage in four foreign countries (Japan, Australia, Singapore, Poland) and four United States cities (San Francisco, Monterey, Austin and Dallas) required to tell this global story.

Sushi Impacts the World's Oceans:

In many ways, sushi has been “globalized”. A product formerly found only in Japan has grown exponentially in other nations and an industry has been created to support it. In a rush to please a hungry public, the expensive delicacy has become common and affordable, appearing in restaurants, supermarkets and even sushi fast food trailers in cities like Austin, Texas. The traditions, requiring years of apprenticeship, have given way to quick training and mass-manufactured solutions.

This hunger for sushi has led to the alarming depletion of apex predators in the ocean – including bluefin tuna – to such a degree that it has the potential to severely impact the ecological balance of the world's oceans leading to a collapse of all fish species. But despite the warnings of fishery scientists who say that strong conservation measures are needed, and the efforts of “direct action” groups like Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund to draw attention to this crisis, governments have been very slow to respond.

Some facts to consider:

- China will add 50 million sushi consumers in the coming years;
- Greenpeace states that the bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean will be extinct in 3-5 years;
- Fisheries expert Boris Worm found that the ocean's fish will be commercially extinct by 2043;
- While wild fish may disappear, new technology may allow fish for sushi to be harvested completely in captivity

Environmental experts interviewed in the film – including author, restaurateur and Greenpeace campaigner Casson Trainor and the Center for the Future of the Oceans Mike Sutton – outlined the dangers to our oceans where most consumers consider sushi is a convenience food rather than a special meal as it is in Japan. There is an appalling failure by governments to regulate this fast-growing industry. Now it is up to educated consumers to lead the way.

The film also documents the efforts of the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program that educates the public about alternatives to endangered fish that are served at sushi restaurants. The Monterey Bay Aquarium believes if consumers are educated to think more responsibly about what they are eating and the implications of their choices, they will be empowered to make a difference.

Alive Mind C I N E M A

To tell the story of how sushi became a global cuisine, over two dozen experts, sushi chefs, and other people in the world of sushi were interviewed on location for the film. The principal characters include:

Mamoru Sugiyama – One of Tokyo's top sushi chefs, Sugiyama-san serves traditional sushi from his Michelin-starred restaurant owned by his family since 1884. Chef Sugiyama discusses his training.

Mike Sutton – The Director of the Center for the Future of the Oceans and a Vice President of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Sutton is an expert on ocean sustainability, government failure to protect fish, and the future of sushi.

Alistair Douglas – Armed with a Ph.D in Marine Biology, Alistair travels the world selling bluefin tuna raised in the “ranches” off the coast of Port Lincoln, Australia. Fluent in Japanese, he is one of the few Westerners to sell sushi grade fish on the floor at the famous Tsukiji fish market auction.

Casson Trenor – A Greenpeace activist, Casson has opened the world's first “sustainable sushi” restaurant in San Francisco to provide consumers with alternatives to endangered fish.

Hagen Stehr – One of Australia's richest men, Hagen has poured millions into a private lab in hopes of raising sushi-grade fish in captivity.

Tyson Cole – A “New American” sushi chef, Tyson got his start as a dishwasher in Texas. His star is rising with plans for a half-dozen new sushi restaurants, a new cookbook, and an appearance on Iron Chef America.

An Experienced Crew to Tell the Story

In addition to producer and director Mark Hall, the principal crew members include editors Sandra Adair, A.C.E. and Catir Cacci, as well as composer Brian Satterwhite. Adair has edited 15 films for Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Richard Linklater. She has recently worked with Dan Rush on the Will Ferrell drama, *Everything Must Go*, and is completing Richard Linklater's latest film, *BERNIE*.

Cacci has been a freelance film editor for over eight years and edited the feature-length documentary *Richard Garriott: Man on a Mission* that won the Audience Award at SXSW in 2010.

Brian Satterwhite has written scores for more than 90 short and feature films including *Richard Garriott: Man on a Mission*, *Artois the Goat*, *Quarter to Noon*, *The Children's War*, *Cowboy Smoke*, *Mr. Hell*, and the award-winning *Ride Around the World*. He has won 11 Gold Medals for Excellence and three Silver Medals from the Park City Film Music Festival, an Indie Intertube Award for Best Score in a web series, a Bronze Telly Award for music, and in 2001, Brian was a finalist in the Young Film Composers Competition sponsored by Turner Classic Movies.

Mark S. Hall – Producer/Director

Mark Hall is an independent filmmaker based in Austin, Texas. *Sushi: The Global Catch* is his first feature-length film project, which was conceived while visiting Warsaw, Poland. Mark was amazed by the popularity of sushi in eastern Europe and viewed the cuisine as emblematic of how economies have rapidly globalized. He was a part of the “early” days of the Internet, having established the world's largest online education portal in 1998. Mark's experience in media – along with his background in business and law – was a big help in completing *Sushi*. His last documentary, *Mission on Seven*, won a Platinum Award at the 2010 Houston Worldfest film festival. He attended graduate school in Japan and loves sushi.

Sandra Adair, A.C.E. - Editor

While living in Los Angeles in the 1980s, Sandra Adair started editing independent feature films and in 1990 served as second editor on Mike Figgis' *Internal Affairs*.

Moving to Austin, Texas in 1991, Adair continued to establish herself as a feature and documentary editor and in 1992 Adair began her long-term collaborative working relationship with Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Richard Linklater, for whom she has edited 15 films. In 2009, Ms. Adair began her collaboration with producer and director Mark Hall on *Sushi: The Global Catch*, and later in 2010, Adair teamed with director Dan Rush on the Will Ferrell drama *Everything Must Go* for Temple Hill Entertainment. Adair is a member of American Cinema Editors and a voting member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She remains very active in the local film community in Austin, as a mentor and as a member of the Austin film society. She is currently on the Advisory Board for Reel Women in Austin, Texas.

Catie Cacci – Editor

Catie has been a freelance film editor in Austin, Texas for the past 8 years and has cut dozens of commercials, webisodes, and long format videos for everyone from Chase Bank to the US Air Force. She has worked as the Senior Editor for Beef and Pie Productions since 2003 for whom she cut the feature-length documentary *Richard Garriott: Man on a Mission* that won the Audience Award at SXSW in 2010. Even though Catie craves sushi more, editing *Sushi: The Global Catch* has made her a more informed sushi consumer. Catie graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a BBA in MIS and a BS in Radio-Television-Film, specializing in editing.

Brian Satterwhite – Composer

Brian Satterwhite is a professional composer based in Austin, Texas. He holds a degree with dual majors in Film Scoring and Composition from the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. Over the years, Brian has written scores for over ninety short and feature films including *Richard Garriott: Man on a Mission* (2010), *Artois the Goat* (2009), *Quarter to Noon* (2008), *The Children's War* (2008), *Cowboy Smoke* (2008), *Mr. Hell* (2006), and the award-winning IMAX™ film *Ride Around the World* (2006). Brian's accolades include eleven Gold Medals for Excellence and three Silver Medals from the Park City Film Music Festival, an Indie Intertube Award for Best Score, a Bronze Telly Award, and in 2001 he was a finalist in the Young Film Composers Competition sponsored by Turner Classic Movies.

Brian is also the producer and host of the Austin film music radio program “Film Score Focus” on 89.5 KMFA and is a highly regarded film music journalist who writes for several major websites including his own professional blog. He pens the soundtrack album liner notes for several major labels and his work in the field of film music journalism has earned Brian membership into the prestigious International Film Music Critics Association.