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## Vancouver Eats: Maruhachi Ra-men

R. Daniel Foster · Tuesday, August 20th, 2024

I love spooning into a good bowl of ramen in winter, but there I was in Vancouver, in late July. I had heard tales about a brand of ramen, *tori-paitan*, new on the scene. A white and creamy chicken soup, *tori-paitan* is a close cousin to *tonkotsu*, created from pork bones and originating in Kyushu, Japan.

[Maruhachi Ra-men](#), with its seven locations in Vancouver, has a rep: it pioneered *tori-paitan* in North America. The eatery's most popular dish is Tamago Ramen, which combines the creamy chicken broth of *tori-paitan* with a soft-boiled egg. Spooning in, the rich collagen-filled broth was both hearty and clean. It paired nicely with the aroma and texture of seaweed imported from Japan. The silky feel of the concoction provided an optimal contrast to the perfectly cooked egg.



Maruhachi Ra-men / Photo: R. Daniel Foster

I visited Maruhachi's Westend location at 780 Bidwell Street, along a stretch packed with other cafes, e-bike rentals (Stanley Park is adjacent), and coffee bars. I arrived before 5 p.m., a good strategy because by 6 p.m., a line starts forming, growing ever longer until it shortens again after 8 p.m. The place is quite popular. Here's the [Westend menu](#).

## The line is worth the wait

If you arrive after 6 p.m., the wait is worth it, but in truth, the line moves fairly quickly. The cafe is solidly on the map of the neighborhood's noodle fans. Maruhachi Ra-men opened its first location in Vancouver in 2013.



The cafe's specialty: tori-paitan / Photo: R. Daniel Foster

The shop has a crisp no-nonsense aesthetic, done in grays with wood tables set with short black stools. A beige abstract painting covers one wall. Outside, the door is framed in warm wood, the sign done in Japanese characters. Wood slats surround a large window. Without glancing down the street, you could be in Tokyo.

Our sides included Takikomi Gohan Onigiri: rice mixed with vegetables and bits of meat, paired with a slice of seaweed. Also, smoked edamame—we ordered two servings; the honeyed dark taste



was irresistible.



The kitchen at Maruhachi Ra-men / Photo: R. Daniel Foster

Tan-men was our vegetable choice: Taiwanese and Chinese cabbage, bean sprouts, spinach, carrots, sugar snap peas, green onion, and wood ear mushrooms. It existed, wonderfully, in a creamy chicken broth.

The meal was served with glasses of Maruhachi draft beer. *Cheers!*

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[Maruhachi Ra-men](#) also accepts online orders at its seven Vancouver locations.

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