How is sushi a form of cultural diffusion?
Cultural Diffusion: “The spreading out of culture, culture traits, or a cultural pattern from a central point.”
Origins

Sushi originated in Southeast Asia in second century A.D. The process of wrapping fish in rice was a way to keep meat fresh without refrigeration, as they found that cooked rice actually ferments the fish. Fish could also be packed in jars of rice and be fresh for up to a year. When the fish was needed, the rice was thrown away.
Evolution

Sushi became the form we know today when in Japan in 1824, a street food vendor owner, Yohei Hanaya, served dishes of shaped vinegared rice, with a piece of raw fish on top. This was the first ‘fast food’ sushi and became very popular in Japan. It was very popular and it eventually integrated from fast food into more formal dining settings.

This new way of sushi was given the name ‘Haya-Zushi’ which meant fast sushi. Flavours and new creations were added and rice was now mixed with vinegar, different kinds of fish were used, and vegetables and sauces were added.
Western Sushi Convenience

Sushi has integrated into Western culture. It is such a form of cultural diffusion that there are roughly 500 sushi restaurants just in the GTA.

As well, cultural diffusion is shown in the growing trend upscale ‘fusion’ restaurants, and sushi being sold conveniently in grocery stores.
Japanese Sushi Culture vs. Western Sushi Culture

Western culture as also put its own spin on sushi, introducing the California rolls. California roll solidified the idea of cultural diffusion when western culture started to invent their own sushi, as this roll is not native to Japan. It started in 1960 in California when a chef realized how he could substitute tuna with cheaper avocado because of similar fatty taste.

Western culture has also changed the tradition of seaweed outside of the roll, and this is purely because of aesthetic reasons and the texture of seaweed.

Additionally, sushi has been adapted to have more bold and inventive flavours instead of the delicate Japanese way. This is shown in the westernized ‘Philadelphia Roll, of salmon, avocado, and cream cheese. This type of roll would not be so accepted in Japan.
Different Kinds of Sushi

**Nigiri**: Fish topping, usually shrimp or salmon on top of rice

**Sashimi**: Fish served alone

**Maki Roll**: Rice and filling, seaweed on outside

**Uramaki Roll**: Rice and filling, seaweed around filling

**Temaki**: Seaweed cone, hand-rolled around fillings
Bibliography


