

# Making Makizushi

Recipes and traditions courtesy of:

The Sonoma County JACL, the Tajii Family, Orange County Buddhist Church  
Cookbook "Generations"

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## Introduction

The intent of this document is to provide instructions to make specifically, Futomaki sushi. However, once the art of making sushi rice is mastered, many other types of sushi can be made.

\*Note – If you look up a recipe for sushi or ask anyone how to make sushi, you will get different instructions and ingredients. Below is what our family has been doing for years and it is the flavor we like. To formalize the instructions, I've take excerpts from "Generations" cookbook from the Orange County Buddhist Church. Recipes were modified using our family recipes which were orally passed down ("a little of this and that"). If you venture into sushi making, I would encourage you to refer to other sources to suit your taste, and make you own treasured traditions.

All the recipes in this guide should allow you to make 10 rolls of futomaki sushi.

## Sushi

Sushi refers to rice flavored with a seasoned vinegar sauce. Many people confuse sushi with sashimi (raw fish) because sushi is often served topped with raw fish (nigiri sushi). This booklet will describe how to make Makizushi (maki meaning "rolled"), which is a rolled form of sushi, which is sliced into bite size rounds and can be stuffed with different fillings. Sometimes the fillings will further define types of makizushi such as kappa sushi (cucumber filled roll), tekka maki (raw tuna filled roll), futomaki (multiple filling roll). We focus on futomaki, as this is the type of sushi that Japanese Americans grew up with. Sushi was generally only served on special occasions such as family or holiday get togethers. It is a lot of effort, but well worth it.

## Sushi Rice

Before making rice, you should have prepared awase-su (the vinegar flavoring sauce) and gu (futomaki fillings).

The process of making sushi rice is divided into 3 parts, the awase-su, the rice, and then how to combine the two to make sushi rice.

### Equipment Needed:

Rice Cooker - large enough for 4 cups of rice, remember it doubles so it should hold 2 qts (if you don't have a rice cooker, I've got instructions below)

Rice Paddle – a rice paddle (shamoji) is preferred to mix the rice, but a wooden or silicon flat spoon or smaller spatula would work also. Metal implements will not do well as the rice will stick to it.

Large Bowl or Oke – Bowl needs to be large enough to hold 4 cups of cooked rice. An oke is a traditional wooden sushi rice container (it needs to be wet before using).

Sudare – Bamboo sushi mat

Standard measuring cups and spoons

Wooden implements must be wet before using. Soak under faucet before using, or better yet, soak implement in water for a few minutes before using.

1 qt pot for making awase-su

## **Awase-su**

### **Ingredients**

1 cup sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup white vinegar or 1 cup rice vinegar

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp salt

Combine sauce ingredients in a sauce pan and heat and stir until sugar and salt dissolves. Cool to room temperature before using on the hot rice.

Left over su can be stored and used as a salad dressing or your next batch of sushi. It is shelf stable and does not need to be refrigerated.

## **The Rice**

As mentioned in the intro, sushi is all about the rice. Below describes the type of rice to use and how to cook it. The rice used for sushi is regular medium to medium short grain white rice. Popular brands of rice are Botan, Kokoho Rose, Cal Rose, Shirakiku, or Nishiki.

\*Note – I do not have instructions for using brown rice, but this variation can be easily found on-line.

### **Ingredients**

4 cups rice

4 cups water

Wash rice\* and drain completely. Let stand in bowl for 30 minutes (helps with texture). Put rice in cooker and add 4 cups of water, and turn on the cooker. After cooker turns off, let stand for 10 minutes. Put rice in to a large pan or oke (if using oke, make sure to wet the wood). Season rice.

\*How to wash rice. Put rice in a pot or bowl. Add water until it covers the rice by a  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and then stir the rice with your hand for about 30 seconds, the water will

turn milky, pour the water out, repeat 2 more times. At this point, the water should be clearer, but does not need to be clear.

\*To cook rice without a rice cooker. You'll need a pot that will hold at least 2 quarts, so a 3-5 quart pot would be about right (its not good to be too big either). It should have a proper fitting lid and a heavy bottom for even heat distribution is preferred. Put rice in pot and add water as above. Put pot on stove on high, when the water begins to boil (it will percolate through the rice), put the lid and turn the heat to medium for 5 minutes. Next turn the heat to low for 20 minutes. Turn heat off and let set for 10 minutes. Now stir the rice and fluff. The rice is now ready. At no point during the cooking time, stir the rice or lift the lid.

## **Seasoning Rice**

To season rice, you need to fold in awase-su into the hot rice (the rice needs to be hot from the cooker). To do this, pour about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of su evenly over the rice. While pouring, cut through the rice with a rice paddle and fold rice over a couple of times, being careful not to mash the rice,. While doing this, have another person fan the rice to cool it down (this step is supposed to keep your rice shiny and firm, but not critical). Repeat steps again with another  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of su. Taste rice for seasoning. If it needs more seasoning, add su by tablespoon and mix and taste. In my opinion, you should not need more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of su total for 4 cups of cooked rice.

Once the sushi rice is ready, place a damp towel on top of rice to keep it from drying out. Sushi rice should warm or just above room temperature before rolling sushi.

## **Gu (Futomaki Sushi Fillings)**

Gu are the fillings to roll into Futomaki rolls. The fillings vary between families and tastes. These are the 5 fillings we use in our family: kanpyo, shitake, carrots, spinach and egg.

Note – The number of fillings to use is up to you. However please note, 4 is bad luck in Japanese/Asian culture. Never use just 4 ingredients, as Asians will look at you side-eyed.

## **Kanpyo (Gourd)**

### **Ingredients**

1 package (1 oz) kanpyo

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt

2 cup dashi  
2 TBSP sugar  
2 tsp soy sauce  
1 tsp salt

Wet kanpyo, then sprinkle  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp of salt and rub between your hands for 30 seconds, then rinse well, then soak in warm water for 20 minutes.

Place kanpyo in sauce pan and add dashi to cover (1-2 cups). Add remaining ingredients, bring to a boil, then turn down to a simmer, cover and cook. After 20-30 minutes, check for tenderness. It should be soft enough to bite, but not too soft, similar to al dente pasta. When done, drain and squeeze out excess liquid.

## **Shitake**

### **Ingredients**

1 package (2 oz) dried shitake or 8 medium sized, 2"-3"  
2 cups warm water  
3 TBSP sugar  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup soy sauce  
1 tsp salt

Rinse mushrooms and then soak them in the warm water (periodically push mushrooms in the water to fully hydrate) for 20 minutes. In pot add remaining ingredients, mushrooms and soaking water, and cook over medium heat until tender (bite tender). Turn heat up to medium high and cook to reduce liquid by at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  or until liquid is almost absorbed. Cool and cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick strips.

## **Carrots**

### **Ingredients**

2 medium carrots (about 8 oz total)  
1 cup water  
2 TBSP sugar  
1 tsp salt

Peel carrots and cut lengthwise in  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick strips. In a shallow sauce pan place carrots in pan, add water (it should cover carrots, if not add more), add remaining ingredients. Cook for 10 minutes on medium heat. Test after 7 minutes for doneness. It should be bite tender, not crunchy, nor mushy. Note-getting the right texture is extremely hard, I've had to more than one batch carrots.

## **Spinach**

### **Ingredients**

1 bunch spinach (about 8 oz)

2 cups of water  
1 tsp salt

Wash spinach very well. Trim roots off but leave stems. Boil spinach in water and salt for about 3 minutes (bite tender, but not wilted). Drain, run under cold water to cool. Squeeze out excess water. Pick strands apart and line them up to make 10 7' bundles.

### **Tamago-yaki (egg for sushi)**

#### **Ingredients**

4 large eggs  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon mirin  
1/2 teaspoon shoyu  
1/2 teaspoon salt

Mix egg well with all ingredients. Cook over low heat, as the egg starts to set on the bottom, lift edges and allow liquid egg mixture on top to run underneath. Flip when egg is all set but still wet on top, to cook through. Because the egg has sugar be careful not to get it too brown, so watch the heat.

If you don't have a Tamago-yaki pan, which I assume you don't, use a non-stick 8"-10" frying pan.

This egg recipe is excellent used as a topping for ramen, udon, or in salads.

### **Making Futomaki Sushi**

Method for rolling Futomaki or any makizushi.

Figure 1 Place a sheet of nori on the mat with the end toward you and even with the mat. Shiny side down (there's a shiny side and rough side, but if you can't tell, it's just for looks). Sprinkle some awase-su on the nori and put about 1 cup of sushi rice on nori. Wet your fingers with su or water and spread rice with finger on to nori to a thickness of less than 1/2 inch leaving a border of about 1 1/2 inch uncovered.

Figure 2 Arrange 2 strands of kanpyo, 1 row each of shitake, carrots, egg, and spinach on the rice about 1/3 to 1/2 from the front edge.

Figure 3-6 Moisten uncovered portion of nori with awase-su. Roll away from you by lifting the mat near you over the gu, being careful to keep gu (filling) in place with your fingers.

Figure 7-8 When the edge of the mat touches the rice, lift the mat and use your fingers to tuck the edge over the gu and finish rolling the sushi. As you

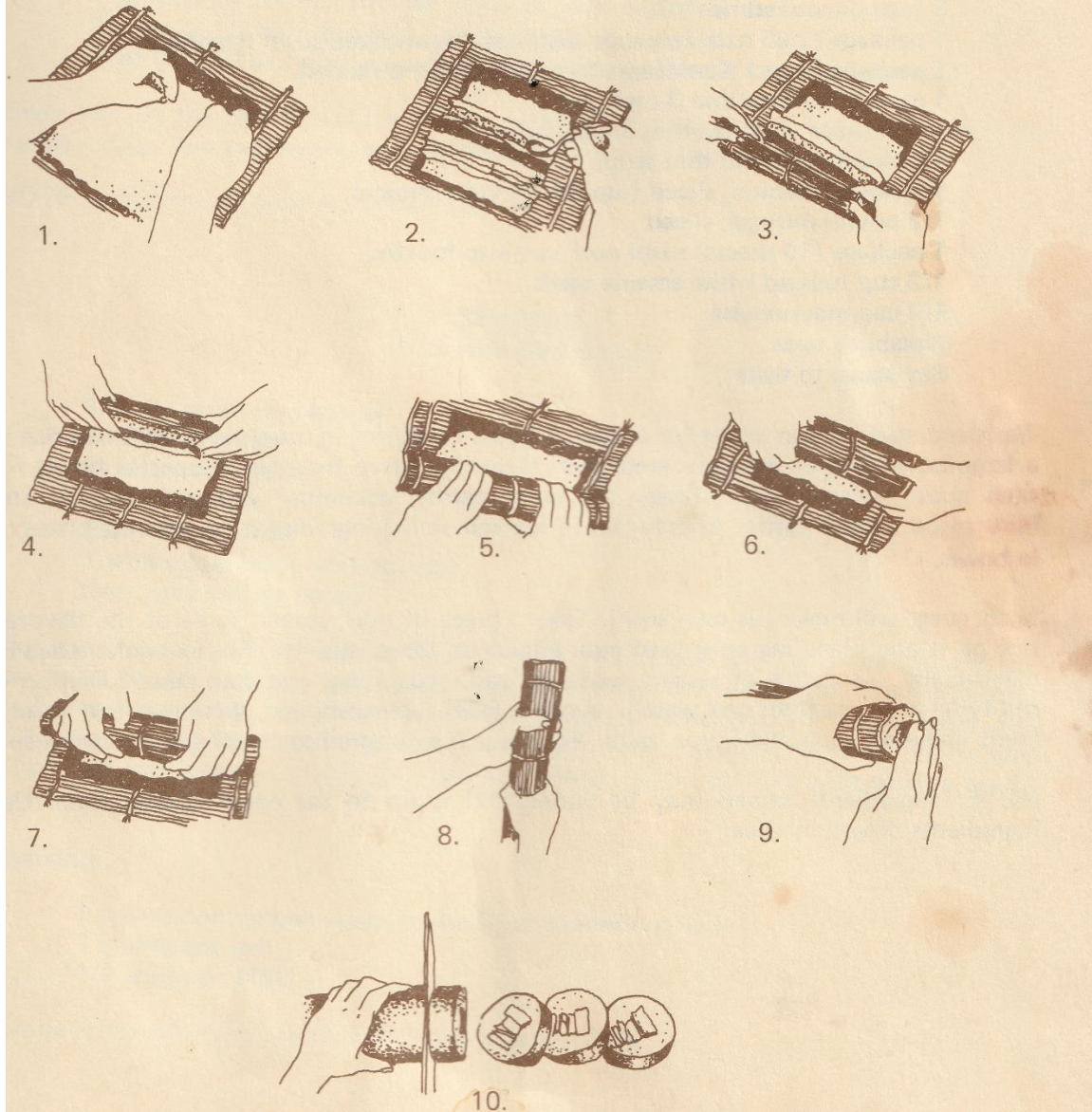
roll, try to keep the shape as round as possible (this should happen naturally, but just be conscious of it).

Figure 9 Roll sushi again by rolling the mat around the sushi and applying slight pressure to tighten the roll. Wet finger and gently push in rice and gu on each side of the roll. At this point you can roll your roll in wax or parchment paper, or plastic wrap

Figure 10 Cut sushi in desired thickness, traditionally cut into 7 pieces. To make it easier to slice, your knife should be very sharp, and wiping your knife with a piece of paper towel soaked with su.

Arrange the sliced sushi on a platter, cut side up. Serve with pickled ginger (beni shoga or gari shoga)

## ILLUSTRATIONS ON HOW TO PREPARE NORIMAKI



## Glossary

Kanpyo - dried gourd strips made by peeling long, thin strips from calabash fruits, then drying them.

Makizushi - maki meaning "rolled", is a type of sushi which is a rolled and sliced into bite size rounds and can be stuffed with different fillings. Sometimes the fillings will further define types of makizushi such as kappa sushi



- (cucumber filled roll), tekka maki (raw tuna filled roll), futomaki (multiple filling roll).
- Nigiri sushi - Nigiri means “hand-pressed sushi”, and is a slice of fish rested upon a small ball of seasoned rice.
- Nori - Dried edible seaweed usually sold in square sheets. Sheets are extremely thin, almost see-thru. These sheets are often used in rice dishes such as makizushi (rolled sushi) or onigiri (rice balls) to wrap the rice.
- Sashimi – Fish served raw. Different fish and parts of fish will differentiate types sashimi.
- Shoga - Pickled ginger condiment typically served with sushi or sashimi and other dishes. There are two common types: beni shoga is bright red and cut into match sticks and tends to be vinegary; gari shoga is pink and thinly sliced and is sweet.
- Shoyu – See Soy Sauce
- Soy Sauce – Also called shoyu, in this document always means Japanese style soy sauce which is made from soy beans, salt, and water. Japanese style soy sauce brands include Kikoman, Yamasa, and Aloha.
- Su or Zu – Translation variation but means the same and you will see it interchanged. It is a sauce made of vinegar, sugar, and salt, and used to flavor rice to make sushi, or can be used as a
- Sushi - Rice flavored with a seasoned vinegar sauce. Dishes made with sushi are often confusingly also called sushi.
- Tamago yaki – Tamago meaning “egg”, yaki meaning “grilled” is an omelet flavored with sugar, sake, and salt, and is eaten alone, or in or on top of sushi, or as a topping on noodle soup dishes (like ramen or udon).
- Zu – See Su