



Sushi 101 for instant Japanese

Never tried making sushi before? It's all *masak masak* if you follow our easy steps

SUSHI is now a staple in our eat-out routines. The popularity of these little Japanese morsels has risen right along all things Nihon, from J-pop idols to Harajuku street fashion.

Go Japanese for a touch of class. No one beats the Japanese when it comes to food presentation. Colour, shape and texture sometimes take precedence even over taste.

And if you make it yourself, you can satisfy both eye and tummy. Make it for the family as an economical alternative to eating out at a sushi bar, or plan a sushi party for friends and chill out with chilled stone sake or Suntory whisky.

Carrefour is having a Japanese promotion this week, and among the products on offer is a Japanese sushi starter kit.

It includes a packet of Japanese seaweed (*nori*), a bottle of sushi vinegar, a tube of wasabi, a bottle of Japanese soya sauce AND a sushi mat.

They also have the Japanese short and medium grain rice that is slightly sticky and ideal for sushi. Cook it like you would normal rice, but add just a little more water. It should be about two and a half cups water to two cups rice.

Quickly stir in the sushi vinegar when the rice is still piping hot and rake through with a pair of chopsticks. Cool well before using.

If you make the sushi rice properly, the grains will have a lovely lustre that sparkles.

As for ingredients, I like packing the sushi into

sweet beancurd skins for *inari sushi* and topping them with a creamy tuna mayo or like what I've done today, with crisp grilled slices of eel (*unagi*).

You can just about put anything into a sushi roll.

Try combining crabsticks and avocado and sprinkle on some pink sugared fish floss. Or go for pickled seaweed strips sprinkled with toasted sesame, and either add strips of fresh tuna or smoked salmon to the roll.

Even meat floss can be used with cool cucumber juliennes for a tasty contrast of textures.

I've even done fruit sushi for dessert. Roll up diced strawberries or kiwis in the centre, and sprinkle one cut side with chocolate rice or hundreds and thousands. Use your imagination and your taste buds. Sushi rolling is fun, and so easy you can get the kids to help make some.



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Inari Sushi and Rainbow Sushi Rolls

Ingredients:

1 packet roasted seaweed (*nori*)
1 packet smoked salmon
1 packet pickled seaweed (*wakame*)
1 packet prawn roe (*ebikko*)
1 packet crabsticks
1 packet Japanese sushi rice
1 bottle sushi vinegar
2 packets sweet bean curd skins (*aburage*)
Avocado, cut into slices
A little pink fish floss
2 packets grilled eel (*unagi*), cut into 6cm by 3cm pieces.

Method: (Sushi rice)

1. Measure two cups sushi rice into rice cooker. Wash well and drain. Add two and a half cups water to cook. When rice is cooked, add three large tablespoons sushi vinegar (to taste) to rice while it's still hot. Stir well to combine and fluff up. Cool and set aside.

Note: Sushi rice must be completely cooled before using.

Method:

(Inari Sushi)

1. Gently open up beancurd skins to create a "pocket". Take a large spoonful of sushi rice, shape to fit into beancurd.
2. Press down rice gently and top with a slice of grilled eel.

Method:

(Rainbow Sushi Salmon Rolls)

1. Spread bamboo sushi mat on a flat surface. Place a *nori* sheet on top.
2. Wet hands and spread out sushi rice to almost two-thirds of *nori* sheet, taking care to spread right up to edges.
3. Spread out smoked salmon along one edge. Top with pickled seaweed and sesame seeds. (See top picture, left)
4. Keeping top edge of the bamboo mat in place with one hand, gently roll up *nori* sheet with sushi rice in the other (see bottom picture, left). Press the mat down with palm of your hand and pull the roll towards you with your fingertips to firm it up.
5. Neaten ends and cut with a sharp knife. Clean knife well in water each time so you get a clean cut.

(Rainbow Sushi Crabstick Rolls)

Repeat steps 1 & 2 as above.
3. Line up crabsticks and avocado slices along edge of rice.
4. Sprinkle pink fish floss in a neat row. Add prawn roe (*ebikko*).
5. Roll up sushi as before and cut.

Grocery Checklist

(Fresh produce prices are seasonal):

1 set sushi starter kit (includes *nori*, sushi vinegar, wasabi, Japanese soya sauce and sushi mat) \$13.85
1 packet Carrefour smoked salmon (\$5)
1 packet *chuka wakame* or seaweed (\$2.80)
1 packet prawn roe or *ebikko* (\$3.20)
Japanese sushi rice (\$6.80)
2 packets sweet beancurd skins or *aburage* (\$2.80 each)
Pink fish floss (\$2)
Crabsticks (\$2)
Grilled eel or *Unagi* (\$9.90 for 3 pkts)
(Most items available at Carrefour)

