

Roll with it: Sushi, Father's days coincide

Story and photos by **MAKENZIE WHITTLE** • The Bulletin

It just so happens that Friday is International Sushi Day, and this year, that coincides nicely with Father's Day on Sunday, so why not roll your own rolls for him? Fill them with dad's favorite fish with some vegetables and whatever sounds good for a delectable Father's Day treat that may be atypical for feasts of the day — but always tasty.

It can be a tricky process at first, especially if you're rolling by hand and without the help of something like a sushi bazooka, a tube where you can build your roll easily then compress it and press it out in a perfectly round roll ready for the outer layer seaweed sheet, known as nori. (In all honesty, I used one of these because I had never attempted to make sushi and could use all the help I could get).

NOTE: These are not the most traditional nor professional ways to do this, but they are easy ways to get started with the cuisine.

SUSHI RICE

Probably the most important thing to get right with sushi is to make sure your rice is cooked to sticky perfection. If it's too dry, the roll falls apart, and if it's too wet, then it can turn into a soggy mess. Use a standalone rice cooker, stovetop or microwave cooker to get your rice ready.

Ingredients

- 2 cups sushi rice (short grain, white rice)
- 1 ½ cups of water
- 1 piece of kombu/dried kelp (optional)
- 2 tbsp. seasoned rice vinegar

Directions

In a small bowl rinse your rice until the water runs almost clear, then drain it completely and put it into your cooker. Fill with 1 ½ cups of cold water and let it soak for 20 to 30 minutes with the kombu. Cook for the standard amount of time for your cooker (many rice cookers have a specific "sushi rice" setting).

In a medium bowl (traditionally a wooden one), gently place the cooked rice and pour the vinegar over the top. Then using a rice paddle or rubber spatula gently cut the rice at 45-degree angles and fold in the vinegar through the entire bowl.

Cover with a clean, damp kitchen towel so the towel is touching the top of the rice and let it sit until the rice reaches about room temperature. You can also put it in the refrigerator, but be careful not to let it dry out. If you make too much or are preparing in advance, put in an airtight container and freeze it then reheat when needed in the microwave.

When placing the rice on the rolling mat or bazooka, wet your fingers to help keep the rice from sticking to your hands.



Spicy crab roll sushi with a tempura shrimp roll behind.

Yields enough rice for 5 to 7 rolls.

SPICY CRAB ROLL

The style of the crab roll, or in this case krab roll, is not really traditional, but it is incredibly popular in the U.S. If you grab one at your favorite grocery store sushi counter, chances are that it will be the "inside out" version of a sushi roll, meaning the rice is on the outside and the nori is on the inside. You can make this either way, but the recipe that follows has the nori on the outside.

If you want, you can also use smoked salmon or tempura shrimp instead of the crab meat, or make different variations for your own sushi feast.

Ingredients

- 1 cup of sushi rice, cooked
- 2 sheets of nori
- 1 package of imitation crab (you can also use real crab meat)
- 1 medium avocado, thinly sliced

- 1 small cucumber, thinly sliced spears
- ¼ cup Sriracha sauce mayo
- 2 tbsp. sesame seeds

Directions

Using a sushi mat: Place the nori shiny side down on the mat and evenly spread about half the rice on the nori, leaving about ½ inch strip empty on the edge farthest from you.

Place the crab, avocado and cucumber in horizontal lines across the rice and drizzle the Sriracha mayo in one line next to the cucumber.

Pick up the bottom edge of the sushi mat and start rolling the nori sheet over the filling, keeping it tight and firm. Once the mat reaches the rice, pull the mat from opposite side and work the top side over the roll and continue until everything is tightly rolled up. If the nori doesn't want to stick, use some water to help seal the roll. Gently squeeze the mat and then set the roll aside and make the remaining rolls.

Using a bazooka: lightly grease each side of the tube and layer in about ¼ cup of rice in each side. Use the plunger rod to create an indentation on each side and then add the fillings.

Place the plunger rod into the screw end and close the tube and latch it.

Put the stopper on the open end of the bazooka and then turn the rod four or five times to compress the roll.

Remove the cap and squeeze the rice roll out onto the nori (shiny side down). Once the entire roll has been pushed out, roll the nori around it and wet the ends to stick them down.

To finish, dampen a kitchen towel and, using a very sharp knife, cut your roll into evenly sized pieces, wiping your blade on the towel after every cut.

Drizzle the rolls with remaining mayo and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Yields 2 to 3 rolls.

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