



Sushi 101 Class Notes

Thanks for taking our sushi class! These notes will be very helpful if you have an interest in making sushi at home. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Carl Rosa

Carl Rosa
ExploreSushi.com

Helpful Links:

ExploreSushi Website: www.exploresushi.com

Tours to Japan Website: www.journey2japan.com

Carl's personal email: carldrosa@yahoo.com

Carl's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/carl.rosa.77/>

Carl's personal assistant (Dominic Walsh): dwalsh@pacificwest.com



Never forget – Quality Sushi is Quality Sushi Rice

“Fish is the SECOND INGREDIENT. The Main Ingredient...is Rice. So, my sushi...is rice.”

Master Sushi Chef Naomichi Yasuda



Bourdain/Yasuda Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-06j6yyNQ>



Characteristics of Quality Sushi Rice

1. Sushi rice must be sticky, shiny
2. Sushi rice should have a semi-sweet vinegar flavor
3. Top quality sushi rice is served at body temperature
4. Purchase short-grained, white rice (sushi rice would be specified on the bag)

Recommended Top Quality Sushi Rice Brands



Tamaki Gold



Tamanishiki



Koshihikari



Akitakomachi



Sushi Fact:

Short-grained white rice, when properly prepared, becomes naturally sticky. This is an ideal texture for quality sushi rice.



Step #1

Measure the sushi rice for cleaning. Sushi rice must be cleaned thoroughly before cooking. The average sushi eater enjoys about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of rice per meal. Measure out the necessary rice into a bowl and use clean, cold water to wash the rice.

Watch this helpful video to ensure you're following the proper rice cleaning process



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUm_TMvTzSE

Step #2

Once the bowl of rice is cleaned and drained of all water, it's time to cook the rice. It's recommended that you use a rice cooker to ensure it's easily and thoroughly cooked.



Most standard rice cookers have a 'cook' and 'warm' setting. When cooking the rice, use a 1:1 volume of rice/water. Do not add anything else. The rice will be seasoned *after* the cooking process.

For example, if you're cooking four cups of sushi rice, ensure you pour 4 cups of water into the rice cooker. Then, ensure that the sushi rice cooks and warms for the same amount of time. If the rice cooks for 20 minutes, let the rice warm for 20 minutes. The rice may warm longer, if necessary. But your goal is to ensure that the moisture/water is thoroughly cooked out of the rice. This will ensure your sushi rice is properly cooked, hot and sticky.



Step #3

Once the rice is cooked, dump the rice into a plastic, glass, ceramic or wooden bowl. Before adding the necessary vinegar, it's ideal to avoid using metal when you're about vinegar to properly season the rice. If you avoid it, please do not utilize a metal bowl or paddle.

Seasoning Your Sushi Rice

In today's sushi-loving world, products are made to help you season your sushi rice with ease. In a common grocery store (usually in the Asian Food/International Food section), you can find these one of these items:



Mizkan's Sushi Seasoning



Nakano Seasoned Rice Vinegar



Otafuku's Sushi Vinegar

Important:

If the three products above are not available (or you can't seem to find them), feel free to purchase any sushi-type vinegar that specifies *seasoned* vinegar. Do not purchase ordinary rice vinegar. Common rice vinegar is not suitable and will have a generic vinegar flavor. *Seasoned* rice vinegar is rice vinegar that contains sugar and salt as well. This is fundamental to quality sushi vinegar. If you'd like to create your own sushi vinegar at home, watch this YouTube video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfW9nSgy_3Q

Once the sushi rice is seasoned, you can either allow the rice to cool down to a warm temperature or cool the rice down by fanning it. Your goal is to ensure that the vinegar (and sugar contained within the vinegar) begins to dry and stick to the grains of rice. This ensures the rice is warm, sticky, sweet and 'vinegary'. *Never forget that warm, vinegary and flavorful sushi rice is the key to quality sushi.*



Use this video from our YouTube Channel to learn the basic process in seasoning your sushi rice properly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvbYN1Vv1XY>



Shopping for Your Sushi Supplies

When you're ready to start shopping for your sushi supplies, here are the best markets to consider in Houston, Austin, Colorado Springs and Denver.

Houston, Texas

- Seiwa Japanese Market: 1801 S Dairy Ashford Rd #116, Houston, TX 77077
- Super H Mart: 1302 Blalock Rd, Houston, TX 77055
- Ranch 99: 1005 Blalock Rd, Houston, TX 77055
- Yun Loy Market: 475 Sawdust Rd, Spring, TX 77380

Austin, Texas

- Ranch 99: 6929 Airport Blvd #110, Austin, TX 78752
- MT Supermarket: 10901 N Lamar Blvd G, Austin, TX 78753
- Super H Mart: 11301 Lakeline Blvd, Austin, TX 78717
- Hana World Market: 1700 W Parmer Ln Suite 100, Austin, TX 78727

Colorado Springs, CO

- Asiana Market: 5740 N Carefree Cir # 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80917
- Asian Pacific Market: 615 Wooten Rd #160, Colorado Springs, CO 80915
- Sun Oriental Market: 3805 E Pikes Peak Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Denver, CO

- Pacific Mercantile Company: 1925 Lawrence St, Denver, CO 80202
- H-Mart: 2751 S Parker Rd, Aurora, CO 80014
- GW Supermarket: 12303 E Mississippi Ave, Aurora, CO 80012



Your Sushi Class Grocery List

Obviously, some of the items you purchase would be dependent on your personal preferences. For example, if you prefer to use soy paper instead of nori/seaweed sheets, you'd make the appropriate choice.

But this list is a great place to start.





Recommended Rice Cookers

When you're ready to make your own sushi rice, rice cookers are highly recommended. First, they are inexpensive. A basic rice cooker for Walmart or Target is rarely more than \$40. Secondly, they will last for years. Third, they work off of temperature and not time. This ensures a steady cooking process – providing great sushi rice every time.



Aroma 6-Cup Rice & Grain Cooker, 8X Bonded Granite Coating

Rice Capacity – 6 cups by volume

Cost – Usually about \$20

Small, easy-to-clean, dependable



Dash Mini 2-Cup Rice Cooker

Rice Capacity – Small, 2 cups by volume

Cost – Usually less than \$20

Great for only one or two people, automatic shut-off function



Black and Decker 6 Cup Rice Cooker

Rice Capacity – 3 cups of un-cooked rice

Cost – Usually less than \$40

Steamer basket is included, non-stick coating



Types of Sushi

When most people learn to make sushi, they stick to ‘what they know,’ however, there are several forms of sushi that you can create at home for a fraction of the cost of common Japanese restaurants



NIGIRI: A pod of sushi rice with one or two toppings. The topping is called the ‘Neta’ – avocado, tuna, shrimp, etc.



HOSOMAKI: A ‘thin’ sushi roll, usually containing one ingredient, for example: tuna roll, salmon roll, cucumber roll, etc.



MAKI: A common sushi roll, usually including multiple ingredients inside the roll, for example – cucumber/avocado, krabstick, etc.



URAMAKI: A common sushi roll with a reversed process – where the sushi rice is on the outside.



TEMAKI: Known as a ‘hand roll’ in America. Typically a funnel-shaped sushi but in some cases, the rolls are created in a cylinder.



OSHIZUSHI: Known as a ‘pressed sushi’ in America. This is a famous form of sushi that is popular in southern Japan. The sushi is pressed in a square or rectangular shape.



Sushi Misconceptions & Myths about Japanese Cuisine

There are numerous misunderstandings about sushi and Japanese cuisine in general. Please review the information below and contact us if you have questions.



Nigiri sushi (ni-giri) refers to grabbing or gripping. Nigiri sushi, typically, is designed to be picked up with your fingers (gripping it) rather than using chopsticks.



Sake (pronounced Sock-aye) is brewed similar to beer, not wine. Many people make the mistake of interpreting rice wine for sake. But rice wine is actually mirin and used in cooking.



Many people make the mistake of believing that tempura (shrimp, veggies, fish, etc) is Japanese by origin. It's not. It started in Portugal. The concept was introduced by a Portuguese sailor to the Japanese ruler of Japan and he fell in love with the flavor. Since then, tempura became a staple in Japan.



Sashimi means 'Flesh/Meat cut with a knife'. All forms of meat are technically sashimi and it doesn't have to be served raw to qualify. For example, Unagi slices are considered unagi sashimi, but all unagi is cooked/grilled eel.



Mixing wasabi and soy sauce is perfectly fine for sashimi and sushi rolls. If anyone tells you that you should not do it, they are wrong. However, you should not use wasabi-filled soy sauce on nigiri sushi. Nigiri sushi is meant to exude the balance of flavor and a mixture of soy sauce/wasabi will dilute the balance.



Purchasing the Ideal Fish/Seafood for Sushi-at-Home

This is a topic that makes most ‘amateur sushi chefs’ a little nervous. Actually, it’s easier than you think. Follow our advice and you can’t go wrong. When making sushi at home, it's crucial to use the right type of fish to ensure safety, freshness, and quality. Here are the key things to keep in mind:



Choosing Safe Fish for Sushi

Ideal Fish has ideal filets: Always buy fish from a trusted fishmonger or supplier. This designation means the fish has been handled and frozen according to FDA guidelines to kill parasites. If you’re going to purchase it from a supermarket, purchase it, freeze it for a week or longer in your freezer before using.



Best Fish for Sushi at Home

- **Tuna (Maguro, Ahi, Bluefin, Yellowfin, Bigeye):** One of the safest and most common choices.
- **Salmon (Sake):** Must be frozen properly before use to eliminate parasites.
- **Hamachi (Yellowtail):** Rich, buttery texture; great for sashimi and nigiri.
- **Madai (Red Snapper):** A firm, delicate white fish often used in sushi.



Proper Preparation & Handling

If you're unsure of the fish’s history, freeze it for at least 7 days to prevent parasites. Additionally, if you handle the fish/seafood properly, the risk of any parasitic infection is very low (.005% risk).



The terms "sushi grade" and "sashimi grade" are often used in the industry to suggest that fish is safe to eat raw, but in reality, there's no official standard or regulation defining these labels. Fish labeled as "sushi grade" or "sashimi grade" simply means it has been frozen to a certain temperature to kill parasites, making it safer for raw consumption. However, these labels are more of a marketing tool than a guarantee of quality, so it's important to ensure you're buying fish from a reputable source that follows proper handling and storage procedures.



Common ‘Sushi Sauces’ You Can Make at Home

Don’t make the mistake of thinking that many common sushi bar sauces are beyond your capability. Not only are they easy, but making them at home will improve the quality, allow you to customize the sauce(s) to your liking and enjoy sizable portions with being over-charged for them.



Teriyaki Sauce

Making great Teriyaki Sauce is easier than you think. The key is to not cook it until it’s a rolling boil. If you do, it will severely thicken once it cools down. This is the best teriyaki sauce recipe we’ve ever used:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfUh50ZNiQE>



Ponzu Sauce

Ponzu sauce is a fantastic sauce for sashimi (strips of sliced fish) but not the best sauce for sushi itself. However, it’s best to realize the common ponzu sauce is merely a citrus-based soy sauce. We use this recipe. It’s super simple and easy to do:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMjunq9sY14>



Spicy Mayo

There are three basic ingredients that most people can find when shopping in a local grocery store. In many cases, you have most of these items in your kitchen already. This is the easier way to make spicy mayo for sushi.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1wb8XnNcKA&t=33s>



Best Sake Recommendations

Most sake, in the United States, comes from Japan. Very little sake is produced in the USA. Here are the best recommendations for enjoying sake at home.



GEKKEIKAN - HORIN JUNMAI DAIGINJO SAKE
About \$60



IMAYO TSUKASA – RED KOI SAKE
About \$95



“HEAVEN’S SAKE” SAKE
About \$60



NARAMAN SAKE
About \$35



Great Online References for Additional Help

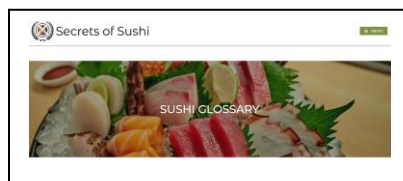
If you'd like to find more information online, these links below can be a big help.



The Spruce Eats – Beginner Sushi Glossary

A helpful glossary of info that's bound to solve a few mysteries in your quest to make sushi at home.

<https://www.thespruceeats.com/beginners-sushi-glossary-1328509>



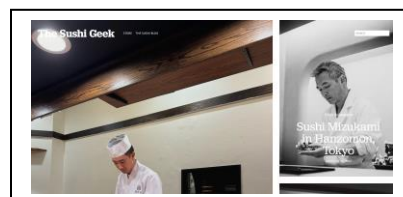
Secrets of Sushi

Three years ago, this website was the number one website for sushi information, but they decided to add a bunch of advertisements to it, but still good info. www.thesushigeek.com



SushiFAQ.com

Although this website used to be a lot better before they added a ton of ads on their pages, the information is reasonably accurate and can be helpful when you want to learn more. <https://www.sushifaq.com>



The Sushi Geek

One person who posts their finest sushi experiences in Japan. A severe rating of each experience and interactive blog with great pics. www.thesushigeek.com



Best Sushi Spots in Texas and Colorado

The biggest challenge for sushi (in the USA) is consistency. We found the restaurants (below) as the most consistent and suitable for a sushi lunch or dinner. As you know, your experiences can vary from day to day.



Name of Establishment: Tatsu Dallas

Location: Dallas

Address: 3309 Elm St ste 120, Dallas, TX 75226

Website: <https://www.tatsu-dallas.com/>



Name of Establishment: Matsuhisa Denver

Location: Denver

Address: 98 Steele St, Denver, CO 80206

Website: <https://www.matsuhisarestaurants.com/denver/>



Name of Establishment: Aiko

Location: Houston

Address: 1902 Washington Ave suite c, Houston, TX 77007

Website: <https://www.aikohtx.com/>



Crazy Kit Kats in Japan

Spend a few minutes on Google and you'll see the hundreds of crazy flavors of Japanese Kit-Kats.



Websites that display crazy flavors of Japanese Kit Kats

<https://www.thetastytraveler.com/japanese-kit-kat-project/>

<https://www.japancandystore.com/blogs/okashi/kit-kat-flavors?srsltid=AfmBOooyxFxQesuGcCf5nkKOzNzBAgu3rcZVvRqfMYAruDaC5e6sahrn>

<https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/more-300-kitkat-flavors-japan-181602665.html>

<https://www.documentjournal.com/2018/06/hunting-for-kitkats-in-japan/>

<https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2018/10/cryogenic-candy-in-japan-we-dine-at-the-worlds-first-custom-kit-kat-shop/>



Sushi Equipment to Purchase



Hangiri (some folks call it an 'Oke'): Used to make sushi rice.

https://www.korin.com/Wooden-Rice-Mixing-Tub-Hangiri-15-4-39-cm?quantity=1&custcol_sca_line_id=mainItem%253Ae28t60272&srsId=AfmBOoo0qneZsvsupNAr_tMYAz7xiIc3iSQcaHxroY3j1wBe9zWMT1x



Yanagi-ba (Knives): Common, long blades to slice fish easily.

<https://www.yanagiknife.com/?srsId=AfmBOorMVRgS83tO1kjCl9WJpfVHlwiwp9gfV0rkVW9hzq5Gp0FQyCUm>



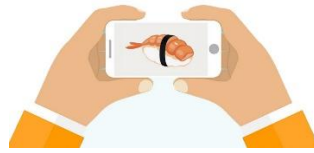
Sushi Geta: Traditional sushi serving trays.

https://www.korin.com/Wooden-Sushi-Geta-Medium-12-x3-5-x0-9-1-60?quantity=1&custcol_korin_addon_items=%257B%2522leftHanded%2522%253A%2522%2522%252C%2522saya%2522%253A%2522%2522%252C%2522freegift%2522%253A%2522%2522%252C%2522p

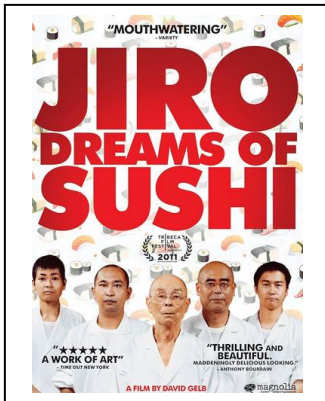


Chopstick Rests/Holder: A nice additional to your chopsticks to ensure your table/tablecloth remains clean.

https://musubikiln.com/collections/japanese-chopstick-rest?srsId=AfmBOopTT_U-QHqMluFP2qtLQsf5nVJtS1dFCSYKmuws0QzZz8p3Y2vv



Fantastic Media/Videos to Watch about Sushi



Jiro Dreams of Sushi is the story of 85-year-old Jiro Ono, considered by many to be the world's greatest sushi chef. He is the proprietor of Sukiyabashi Jiro, a 10-seat, sushi-only restaurant inauspiciously located in a Tokyo subway station. Despite its humble appearances, it is the first restaurant of its kind to be awarded a prestigious three-star Michelin Guide rating, and sushi lovers from around the globe make repeated pilgrimage, calling months in advance and shelling out top dollar for a coveted seat at Jiro's sushi bar.

Watch YouTube Clips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2edsT-HCjE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LoKbaf2vrU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0x0muJjYzp4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7bkMd4JX38>



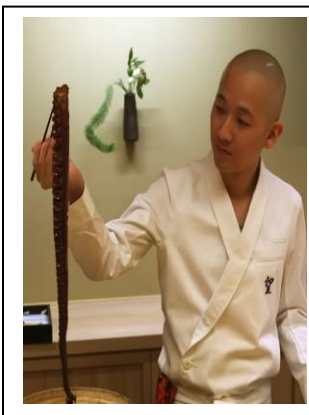
TSUKIJI WONDERLAND - Through the lives of professionals working at Tsukiji Fish Market in Tokyo, the film portraies how Tsukiji has been the center of fish culinary culture and helped Japanese food culture to flourish as we know it today.

Watch the movie trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGJJ4sEsZos>

Watch YouTube Clips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vu3G5iVckcE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2Usc27tWuQ>



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SUSHI MASTER - From breaking down huge fish to serving guests exquisite sushi, Chef Nozomu Abe from Sushi Noz takes us on a journey through his everyday life. Go behind the scenes to see what it really takes to be a true sushi master, day after day.

Watch it on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wAQxJeyvXo>