

SUSHI

Sushi is not only visually stunning when made correctly, the taste is sensational and it can have its benefits to your bone health too.

Obviously it depends on what you decide to put in your sushi and the benefits of eating raw vegetables, fruits, salads and fish are well documented however its not immediately obvious that the other ingredients you can add could be classed as 'super foods.'

Umeboshi plum paste for instance is said to have stomach health promotional properties.

Nori, the dry seaweed wrapping sometimes used includes phytonutrients and minerals including iodine and contains up to 50% protein.

I often use Natto too which is a form of fermented soybean paste and is high in what is often referred to as the 'fifth flavour'... Umami, but quite apart from its exceptional taste profile it is also extremely high in isoflavones which are powerful antioxidants and can help overcome the effects of free radicals as well as promote bone health.

For the rice itself I use Nishiki as I like the size of the grain and has a good flavour but for added health benefits you could try using a young brown short grain rice 'Genmai'

PREP TIME: 45 MINUTES

MAKES ENOUGH RICE FOR 4 LOGS OR 32 CUT PIECES

FOR THE RICE SEASONING

200mL	Japanese Rice Vinegar (preferably red but not essential)
2 Tbsp	Kosher Salt
2 Tbsp	Mirin
8 Tbsp	Caster Sugar
1 sheet	Konbu or 1 sheet Nori broken into small pieces

Heat 150ml of the Japanese Rice Vinegar with the sugar until dissolved then add the remaining 50ml take off the heat.

Add the Mirin, the salt and the Konbu or Nori sheet.

FOR THE RICE

This will make enough for two batches of sushi vinegar which keeps for ages in the fridge and will save you making it next time, trust me you'll thank me later!

750g	Sushi short grain rice
	Plenty of cold water

Rinse the rice under lots of running water in a fine meshed sieve and soak for approximately 30 minutes.

Drain and rinse again. Put 1 litre of cold water in a pan and add the rice, bring to the boil for 1 minute exactly then reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes more whilst covered with a lid. After 5 minutes increase the heat and boil rapidly for a few seconds

before removing the pan from the heat. Keep the lid on the saucepan and leave totally alone for 15 minutes.... No peeking!

Spread the rice onto a lightly oiled tray or non-stick roasting tray. Using a cutting motion add half the prepped vinegar and mix thoroughly taking care not to squash the rice granules. Keep the sushi rice moist by placing wet kitchen towel over it until ready to use. I find its best to use the rice before it gets too cold but it is important to allow the rice to cool sufficiently before rolling raw fish in it.

TO ASSEMBLE

To Make sushi place a sheet of nori on the sushi rolling mat and with damp fingers pick the sushi rice and using a prodding motion with your fingertips spread an even layer of rice about 1-1.5cm in height. Then the filling really is a personal choice, I like to use some unusual vegetables like Ochre or Ladies Fingers, Enoki Mushrooms, peeled cucumber strips or even Red Beet micro-greens as this gives a very dramatic cross section when cut and then add the fish which really is up to your personal preference and imagination but Salmon, Tuna, Sea Bass, Crab Claw, Lobster, Red Mullet all work well.

Other essentials are of course the pink pickled ginger, Japanese soy and green wasabi. I like the wasabi paste that you can buy in a toothpaste style tube as it pipes very well straight from the tube as well as the aforementioned Umeboshi or Natto which should be spread in a thin layer on the rice before adding the other ingredients.

It is important to cut the sushi into uniform pieces as this will enhance the overall appearance of the plate.