

Hantverk & Found

Kate De Syllas

How to cook perfect sushi rice.

If you want to make sushi rice often, it's worth investing in a hangiri bowl, a Japanese wooden vessel used for cooling the rice.

Ingredients

3 1/3 cups high-quality sushi rice

4 cups cold water

A square of dashi kombu (about ½ a postcard in size)

For the seasoning mix

5 tbsp sugar

5 tbsp rice vinegar

2 tsp salt

Method

Wash the rice gently in a bowl or large pan of cold water, massaging it gently (rather than moving it around energetically). Drain and repeat the process 6 times, until the water that drains away is clearer.

Put the washed, drained rice in a large, wide saucepan, add the cold water and dashi kombu and leave it to soak for 10 minutes.

After 10 minutes, cover the pan tightly with foil then cover with a lid, to make it fully airtight. Place it over a medium heat (a diffuser is handy if you're using a gas hob, to avoid any hot spots). Cook, covered and untouched, for 15–16 minutes. Resist checking it!

While it's cooking, make the seasoning mix. Combine the sugar, vinegar and salt in a small pan, heat gently until the sugar and salt have dissolved, then let it bubble briefly to reduce a touch. Remove from the heat.

Take the rice off the heat and leave it to stand (still covered) for 10 minutes, then remove the lid and foil and transfer it to a shallow, flat wooden bowl or plastic tray (a hangiri is ideal) and spread it out. Sprinkle over the seasoning mix then mix the rice with a paddle in a cutting motion, cooling it with a fan in the other hand, until it's just a little warmer than room temperature. Be careful to avoid stirring or folding the rice, as you want to leave the delicate grains intact. When the seasoning has been absorbed by the rice, it's ready for making sushi. Use it within 3 hours (if chilled it tends to go chalky – we cook the rice to order and aim to have the sushi ready just before collection time).

If you have leftover cooked rice, make onigiri for lunchboxes the following day and add some furikake to the rice to flavour it a bit more – the texture won't be perfect, but they are still delicious. (Give people half a sheet of nori to wrap around the rice just before they eat it or the nori will go soggy - in Japanese convenience stores they pack them so that the rice doesn't touch the seaweed until you open them). If you think you will have too much rice for sushi, set some aside before seasoning it and keep it to make sweet or savoury mochi.