Futo Maki ???

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

Short grain rice (Sushi grade)

Unseasoned rice vinegar (Mitsukan brand)

Salt

Sugar

Soy sauce (Kikkoman)

Nori

Can tuna

Mayonnaise (Kewpie Japanese brand is preferred)

Green onions

Eggs

Oil

Imitation crab sticks

Seedless cucumber

Maki sushi roller

Instructions

Sushi is a nutritious, healthy, light, and delicious treat, but as quick and easy it is to enjoy, sushi is all about the preparation! This recipe for Futo Maki is sure to please. Futo Maki literally means "large or fat roll", because it involves rolling a variety of cooked ingredients into one large roll. Fillings vary by individual tastes, but I first came across a similar roll in Osaka when I was studying abroad. I kept buying it, but for economic reasons, after studying it a few times, I attempted to crack the Futo Maki code and this is my re-interpretation. If you want to add your own fillings, think of color combinations as well as flavor combinations that will work and also look amazing. This recipe creates a festive "spring rainbow" color scheme as the picture shows!

First and foremost, cook 2 cups of short grain rice according to package directions. Use a rice cooker for best results, or if you know how, use a steamer.

While the rice cooks, prepare the vinegar base for the rice and the filling ingredients. Imagine that this vinegar mix, sometimes called "sushi vinegar", is the concentrated flavor that once mixed with rice, will perfume and permeate the finished sushi rice. In a small bowl, add half cup of rice vinegar. To it, add 2-3 tablespoons of soy sauce and mix thoroughly. Add a tablespoon of salt and dissolve thoroughly. Finally add 2-3 tablespoons of sugar and also dissolve thoroughly. Now, taste it and imagine the flavor dispersed throughout the rice. It should resemble iced tea, but have a pungent fragrance with a strong tangy, kind of sweet yet subtly salty flavor. This combination should work, but make this to your taste. Add more soy sauce or salt or sugar until desired flavor. Ensure that all salt and sugar is fully dissolved. Set aside. Pre-seasoned rice vinegar is also available at most places, but I prefer to season it myself.

Tuna preparation: Open a can of tuna and drain thoroughly. I prefer tuna canned in oil, since it drains better. With water, you have to drain and pat the canned tuna very dry, almost squeezing it out with your hands. Add it to a medium-sized bowl. Finely mince one green onion and add to the tuna. Add 2-3 dollops of mayonnaise, and mix thoroughly. More mayonnaise may be added if wetter consistency is desired. Scoop contents into a ziploc bag and refrigerate.

Egg preparation: In a large frying pan, add some oil and turn heat on high. In a medium-sized bowl, beat three eggs thoroughly. By now, the pan should be HOT, add only enough beaten eggs to coat the frying pan surface. When the base of the egg is semi-solid but the surface is still runny, pick up one edge of the egg with a spatula or cooking chopsticks and slowly begin to roll over and over like a swiss roll. The runny egg surface once rolled up will cook and bind itself creating the "loaf". When all rolled up, shift the "egg loaf" back to the originating side of the pan and add more oil if

needed. Add more eggs and continue rolling and shifting until all eggs are used up. Remove from pan and set aside on a cutting board to cool. Once cooled cut the loaf into thin long strips. Set aside in a flat plate and cover with plastic wrap.

Crab preparation: Next, prepare the imitation crab sticks. Defrost the imitation crab sticks if frozen. If romm temperature, simply string (like string cheese) each stick into french fry thick lengths, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate.

Cucumber preparation: Wash and pat dry one seedless cucumber. English cucumbers will suffice. Leaving the skin on, cut into french fry thick, approximately 8 inch lengths. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate.

When rice is cooked, dump into a large bowl and stir the rice to circulate trapped heat and steam, to avoid condensation build up. You may also dump it onto a large flat cooking sheet to allow cooling, but this will be one more dirty dish. When the rice is cooled, but no longer steaming (should still be slightly warm), "fan" in the sushi vinegar mix and thoroughly incorporate the mixture into the rice. The vinegar mixture should completely infuse the rice and be very fragrant. You may or may not end up using all of the vinegar mix, but use at least half of it. I add half, and mix, and then taste. If I think it needs more, I'll add more.

Finally... rolling! Lay out everything in simple order on a counter. On a flat plate, lay several sheets of nori, shiny side down. Next to it, a large bowl of water for your hands, the seasoned rice, the tuna mixture, prepped cucumber, crab sticks, and egg.

Using a large dry clean cutting board as your rolling surface, take a piece of nori shiny side down, lay it on the maki sushi roller. Wet your hands and add seasoned rice to the bottom 2/3 of the nori, closest to you. Don't worry so much about flattening it, but do spread it evenly, keeping it to the bottom 2/3 of the sheet. Wet hands will help keep rice from sticking to your hands. Since the tuna mixture is the loosest filling, start with it first. Snip one corner of the ziploc'd bag of tuna mixture and using it like a piping bag, pipe a small row of the tuna mixture across the bottom 1/3 of the nori. Then following the order of how you layed things out, next, add a strip of the cucumber, portioned imitation crab stick (if the length is not enough to fill the width of the nori, feel free to add another or cut to adjust), and finally egg.

Using the maki sushi rolling mat, roll over the bottom 1/3 completely and firmly press forming a roll. Then continue rolling all the way, pressing firmly throughout. Failure to firmly roll throughout will result in a loose and easily breakable roll. Set aside.

Cutting and presentation: When everything's rolled up, take a roll and cut it in half. Swing one half back so that the two halves are now next to each other. Then cut into

equal thirds, so in all you should have six pieces. Continue until all rolls have been cut. If you have remaining egg or cucumber, julienne them and tie them in small bundles for decoration. If you have remaining crab, finely "string" or shred and add some mayonnaise. Use as decoration.

If you will be preparing this for an event, it is best to roll and store in a slightly cool room temperature space. Refrigerating will cause the rice to harden and heat will cause the rolls to sweat and possibly break open. Sushi is best fresh, so when party time approaches then cut as indicated and decorate. Serve on a flat plate with soy sauce for dipping and optional wasabi for added spice! Enjoy!

This recipe should yield 4 complete rolls.