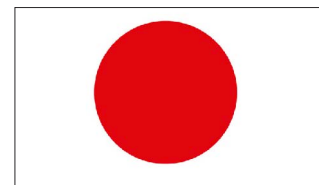


Tofu bags (inari-zushi)

Yields 6 bags



Japan

Ingredients

- 1 pack of inari-zushi (tofu pouches)
- 6 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 2 big carrots, shredded
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon mirin
- 1 tablespoon Japanese soy sauce (Shoyu)
- 1 tablespoon sake (optional)
- 2 cups short-grain Japanese sushi rice
- ½ cup sushi vinegar (optionally mix in some Dashi powder for umami flavor)

Directions

To cook rice:

Place rice in a fine sieve over a bowl of water. Agitate, changing the water at least 3 times until it runs clear. Drain rice well.

For best results, cook rice in a rice cooker. Allow rice to rest and steam for 20 minutes, then invert into a large bowl. Fold in vinegar with a rubber spatula, trying to avoid squashing the grains and releasing their starch.

Taste for a pleasantly sweet-acidic edge. Add more vinegar to taste.

Cover rice with a damp towel. Let rest for 20 minutes to develop flavor.

Assembling the Inari-Sushi:

Soak dried shitake mushrooms in a bowl of warm water for at least 30 minutes. Drain, reserving liquid. Cut off the stems and finely chop the caps.

Pour some of the mushroom soaking liquid into a saucepan. Add sugar, mirin, soy sauce and sake and bring to a boil. Add carrots and mushrooms and simmer for a few minutes until almost all of the liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat and let cool.

While rice is still warm, fold in the cooked carrot and shiitake.

Wet hands with vinegar and form the rice mixture into bite-sized, oblong shapes. Stuff a ball of rice into each inari-zushi bag and fold in the edge (optional). Leave the tofu bag open and garnish with salmon roe and a slice of cucumber (optional).