

Veggie Sushi Party

INGREDIENTS:

5 cups uncooked sushi rice
6 cups water
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
2 tablespoons cane sugar
1 teaspoon sea salt
10 sheets Roasted Seaweed Sushi Nori
2 large English cucumbers, peeled and seeded
2 large avocados
1 large red bell pepper, seed removed
4 medium carrots, peeled
1/2 pound asparagus, stem ends removed
1 6 oz. jar pickled ginger
2 1.5 oz tubes prepared wasabi
1 10 oz. bottle Tamari or Soy Sauce
1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds

DIRECTIONS:

Place the dry sushi rice in a large bowl, cover it with water and stir to release the starch. Drain and repeat until the starch is removed and the rinse water is clear. Add additional water and soak the rice for 30 minutes before cooking.

In a small enamel or teflon coated saucepan combine the rice vinegar, sugar, and salt. Heat on medium and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Set the vinegar aside to cool.

Place the drained rice and fresh water in a large rice cooker and cook according to the manufacturers settings. Or, place the rice and water in a large heavy saucepan, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for 15 minutes. Turn the heat off and let the rice rest covered for an additional 15 minutes.

While the rice is soaking and cooking prepare the vegetables by cutting them into thin long strips. Place each vegetable selection on a plate or in a bowl and arrange them up along cutting boards for the sushi assembly.

When rice is done cooking and resting transfer it to a Japanese Hangiri* bowl or into a large shallow wooden salad bowl or large pyrex mixing bowl. Use a rice paddle or large spoon to fluff the rice to cool it down. Pour the vinegar mixture over the rice and fold it gently to mix well.



To prepare sushi with guests have the vegetables and rice ready in advance (keep the rice covered and at room temperature, do not chill). Provide a couple of bamboo sushi mats so people can roll their sushi without having to wait too long to take turns. To prepare the sushi mats cover and wrap one completely with plastic wrap.

Lay the wrapped sushi mat on a cutting board with the bamboo strips running horizontally in front of you. Lay a sheet of the nori shiny side up on the mat. Place one generous cup of the cooked rice on the nori, dip fingers or the back of a spoon into water to help spread the rice out evenly all the way to the edges. Have towels handy for drying your hands between steps. Sprinkle sesame seeds over the rice then lift the nori carefully and flip it over onto the mat again.

Arrange the sliced vegetables horizontally across the first one-fourth section of the nori closest to you. Fold the sushi mat over the filling and gently squeeze it as you roll the mat away from you. Continue rolling the leading edge of the mat away from you until the nori has been completely rolled.

Sprinkle the roll with additional sesame seeds coating it evenly on all sides. Place the roll seam side down on a cutting board. Dip a serrated edge knife in water and slice the roll every 1 inch to create 8-10 slices per roll. Transfer each piece to a serving plate with pickled ginger, wasabi, and tamari or soy sauce. Enjoy!

*Specialty sushi making equipment can be found at cookware and restaurant supply stores

Recipe courtesy of Liz Gary. For information on free local community cooking classes and special events visit www.newoptionsfoodgroup.com.