

RECIPES FROM MY MOM LOVES ME MORE THAN SUSHI

Developed and tested by Filomena Gomes, author of My Mom Loves Me More Than Sushi, and her children.

Sushi – Japan and Korea
Biscotti – Italy
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SUSHI – Japan and Korea

My husband travelled to Japan and developed a love of sushi. Being a prairie girl, I didn't know anything about it. When we started dating, one of the first places he took me was to a sushi restaurant. He said I had to have sushi. I loved it. I was struggling with the chopsticks and left some rice on my plate. He said I had to eat every grain of rice, since the Japanese believe each grain has a soul. It touched me that a culture would have such reverence for such an important staple food.

The following recipe is for a sushi roll (known as “maki”). Rolls are really fun to make. They do take some practise but you'll see the effort is worth it. Choose colourful and fresh fillings so that when you cut up the roll, the effect is magical.

Before you start, you'll need a few special tools:

Bamboo rolling mats (found in most large grocery stores) enough for the whole family!

A wooden spoon or a rice paddle

Sheets of plastic food wrap about the size of your rolling mat (to keep mat clean)

Chopsticks

Patience :o)

Serves approximately 4

Ingredients

2 cups short-grain sushi rice (*shari*) SHORT-GRAINED rice for a sticky rice

3 cups water or for sushi rice follow instructions on the package for rice to water ratio

Rinse the rice until the water runs clear. Place the rice in a pot and add the water. Bring the rice to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, and let cook for 20 minutes. Allow the rice to stand for 10 minutes after removing from heat.

Ingredients for vinegar mixture

Note: You could also purchase pre-made sushi vinegar and use 1 tablespoon of vinegar per cup of rice.

5 tablespoons rice vinegar

2½ tablespoons sugar

1½ tablespoons salt

1 tablespoon mirin

Make the vinegar while the rice is cooking. Combine the ingredients in a saucepan and heat gently while constantly stirring until the sugar completely dissolves. Put the hot rice in a large bowl and pour 1 tablespoon of vinegar per cup of rice over the surface of the rice and stir with wooden spoon. Cover with a damp cloth to stop the rice from drying out.

Ingredients for fillings

Your choice of fillings - cucumber, avocado, carrot, tofu, red pepper, fresh tuna, fresh salmon, crab, omelette, shitake mushrooms

While rice is cooking, cut the fillings into long strips and have them ready for the rolling.

Ingredients for making the rolls

Rice cooled to room temperature with added rice vinegar

Rice vinegar

Fillings

5-8 sheets seaweed (*nori*)

Wasabi (optional)

Soy sauce for dipping

1. Lay out your bamboo rolling mat on a clean, dry surface and place a slightly larger sheet of plastic wrap over the top of the mat.
2. Place a sheet of nori onto the sheet.
3. Make a ball out of a half cup of the rice and spread the rice carefully onto the seaweed sheet. Use your wooden spoon or paddle to help if the rice tends to be too sticky and try not to push down too hard onto the sheet. Leave about ½ inch along one edge of your sheet free from rice, as this will be used to seal the roll.
4. Opposite from this ½ inch side free of rice is where you'll place your fillings in a line at the end closest to you as you will roll first from this end. (If using wasabi, place a dab on your finger and run along the end closest to you BEFORE placing your filling). Use ¼ - ½ cup of filling (about the thickness of your thumb) along the end.
5. Lift the bamboo mat, plastic and sheet with fillings and start to roll tightly and firmly while keeping the fillings in the roll. The seaweed will stick to itself.
6. Pull the plastic away from the roll and keep rolling evenly until you reach the side free of rice. Wet this side with rice vinegar to seal the roll after you've finished rolling.
7. Shape the ends of the roll and then set aside for a couple of minutes before cutting into six or eight pieces.
8. Pour a small amount of soy sauce into a bowl and dip your piece of sushi in it before eating. Try eating it with chopsticks.

BISCOTTI - Italy

One school where I taught had a lot of students of Italian origin, and they gave me biscotti with a coffee mug as a gift. I had to have the recipe.

The word biscotti, when you break it up, becomes bis and cotti. Translated into English, the word means to be cooked (cotti) twice (bis). This recipe has you cook the dough twice in order to achieve the hard cookie texture.

Makes about 3 dozen small biscotti or 2 dozen large biscotti

Ingredients

½ cup butter (at room temperature)

¾ cup sugar

3 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla

3 cups unbleached flour

3 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons grated lemon peel

2 tablespoons grated orange peel

1 tablespoon anise seed

1 cup chopped almonds

1 cup melted chocolate (optional)

Combine butter and sugar in a large bowl, then add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each egg is introduced. Add vanilla. In another large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt and slowly add to creamed mixture. Incorporate lemon and orange peels, anise seed, and almonds. Blend well. Divide dough into 3 parts and shape each part into a long roll about 1½ inches in diameter. Place rolls onto cookie sheets several inches apart and with your hands, flatten the rolls (but not too much!). Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and slice rolls crosswise ¾ inches thick. Lay cut side down on cookie sheet, return to oven and bake an additional 15 minutes. You can then dunk your cooled cookies into melted chocolate, wait until the chocolate hardens and then eat your “black and white” biscotti.

HOUSKA BREAD – Czech Republic

This is a recipe that reflects the Czech culture. You can find it at the following link:

<http://bread.allrecipes.com/az/Houska.asp> A picture along with another recipe of houska is found at <http://www.culinaryhistorians.org/pastSpeakers/speakers2002.html>

CANJA - Portugal

My parents were Portuguese immigrants in the 50's. Canja was a staple. It meant home, comfort. I make it for my kids all the time. I loved eating this chicken soup when I was a child – and still do! You can make an easy version of canja by using good quality chicken stock, cubed cooked chicken and cooked rice, but I recommend trying the version below at least once.

Serves 8

Ingredients

4 pounds chicken bones and 2 cups diced chicken OR 1 whole chicken

12-13 cups COLD water

1 large onion or 2 medium onions

3 cloves garlic

5 stalks celery

5 carrots

3 sprigs mint

2 teaspoons salt

4 bay leaves

8 whole black peppercorns crushed

¼ teaspoon saffron threads (optional)

1 cup long-grain rice

4 tablespoons rice flour mixed with 4-6 tablespoons cold water

mint leaves

½ lemon + lemon wedges

In a large stockpot, cover the chicken bones or chicken with cold water. Bring to boil and remove any scum that forms on top of the water's surface. Simmer and add onion, garlic, celery, carrots, mint, salt, bay leaves, peppercorns, and saffron (if desired). Cover stockpot and simmer for 3 hours. Stir occasionally during cooking.

After 3 hours, remove bones or chicken and strain broth through a fine strainer. Return broth to stockpot and bring to boil. Add rice and cook for 20 minutes. During this time, dice 2 cups of chicken. Once rice is tender, mix in the diced chicken and the rice flour mixture (this makes the soup a little creamier in texture and may be omitted if a clear broth is desired). Taste for salt and pepper and add if necessary.

Ladle soup into bowls and serve with mint leaves and lemon wedges. Squeeze the ½ lemon for extra lemon.

COUSCOUS - Morocco

For three years I lived in Quebec City, where I studied French. Those years gave me a better sense of what Canada is like. I'd love for every student to live in another province before graduating, even if it's for a summer job. It helps us appreciate how fortunate we are, and what a big country this is.

My interest in French language and culture led me to couscous. The French love Algerian food. Couscous (one of my favourite words to say!) is made from wheat and can replace rice or pasta in meals. It can also be used in sweet dishes, as in this recipe. It is so easy to prepare. You can easily find pre-made couscous in most grocery stores and this recipe is still delicious even if you can't find rosewater or orange blossom water.

Serves 4

Ingredients

1/3 to ½ cup toasted and coarsely chopped nuts (pistachio nuts, blanched almonds, walnuts or pine nuts work well separately or combined)

¼ cup dried apricots (not the dry, shrivelled-up kind, but the soft, plump dry apricots)

1 1/3 cups couscous

1/8 cup granulated sugar OR superfine sugar OR powdered sugar

1 cup boiling water

pinch of salt

¾ ounces unsalted butter at room temperature

¼ teaspoon rosewater OR orange blossom water (optional)

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 tablespoons sugar

1 ½ cups hot milk

To toast the nuts, pre-heat a toaster oven or a conventional oven to 325 degrees. Spread the nuts on a baking tray and bake for 3-5 minutes, watching carefully, until the nuts are golden brown. Let cool. Coarsely chop nuts and place in a bowl. Slice the apricots into long narrow strips and toss into nuts.

Pour the dry couscous into a large bowl and mix in the sugar. Pour 1 cup of boiling water over the couscous. Add a pinch of salt and mix in unsalted butter until completely melted. Mix in the rosewater/orange blossom water. Cover bowl and wait 10-12 minutes. Take a fork and fluff the little grains. Mix in HALF of the nuts and apricots into the couscous.

To serve, find a beautiful platter and pile the warm couscous in the middle. Arrange the rest of the nut mixture around the edge. Mix the cinnamon with the leftover powdered sugar (2 tablespoons) and put in a small dish for your friends and family to sprinkle on top of the couscous. Pour the hot milk in a jug for those who prefer milk with their sweet couscous. Hot milk is poured over the dish, if desired, like cream on porridge.

MEGADARRA - Egypt

We went to a little Egyptian restaurant and asked what we should try. They suggested megadarra (they called it koushari), but it sounded so simple – lentils and rice. An older gentleman sitting nearby said, “You should try it.” It was exotic and had wonderful flavours. Then I started tutoring an Egyptian girl. I asked her mother for the recipe and she gave it to me. But it had no quantities. I said I didn’t know if I could make it. She offered to come over and help me make it.

Also known as mujaddara or mougaddara, you can make this lentil and rice dish more fun by adding cooked macaroni, and topping it with tangy tomato sauce and fried onions (known as koshary or koushari). Of course, the more fun version is included below.

Note: This recipe requires a lot of pots and pans, but it is not difficult. Basically, you will be cooking the lentils, the rice, and the macaroni separately and then mixing everything together at the end. While the lentils, rice, and macaroni are cooking, prepare the sauce.

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

¼ cup vegetable oil

2 cups onions, finely sliced

9 cups water

1 cup brown lentils

1/3 cup rice

2 1/2 teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon oil

3/4 cup macaroni

In a heavy bottom pot, heat oil and brown onions. Remove half of the onions and drain on a paper towel. Set aside for garnish. The other half in the pot will be used at a later time.

In another pot boil 4 cups water. Add the cup of lentils to boiling water. Bring to the boiling point again and reduce heat to simmer. Cook for 25 minutes or until lentils are tender. (During this time, cook the rice, macaroni and sauce.) Drain and set aside.

Bring 2 cups water, rice, and 1 teaspoon of salt to a boil. Lower heat, cover pot and cook for 20 minutes or until tender. Drain and set aside.

Boil 3 cups water, add 1/2 teaspoon oil, macaroni, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Return to a boil. Lower heat and cook uncovered for 5-7 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Ingredients for tangy tomato sauce (optional but recommended):

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

2-3 cloves minced garlic

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1/4 cup water

1 cup tomato sauce

1 tablespoon white vinegar

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

a pinch of cayenne

For the sauce, fry garlic in oil in a pan until golden but not brown. Add tomato paste and water to the pan. Blend together. Pour in the tomato sauce and cook for 10 minutes or until sauce has thickened. Add vinegar, salt, pepper, and cayenne.

Just before serving, mix lentils, rice, macaroni and 1 to 1 1/2 teaspoons of salt (or to taste) in the first pot with the oil and onions. Gently heat through. Pile onto a platter and garnish with the onions on the paper towel.

The tomato sauce is spooned over top of the megadarra/koushari like ketchup over fries, if desired.

SMORGASTARTA - Sweden

My husband's grandfather emigrated to Canada, and once he arrived, he dropped the notion of being Swedish. He just wanted to be Canadian, not stand out. My husband wanted to do something Swedish, so I did some research. What I love about Smorgastarta is that it incorporates smoked salmon. It's also colorful – it appeals to the eye. For kids it's fun to build a sandwich cake.

Recipes and pictures can be found at the following website:

<http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-37418/images.html>

CREPES - France

On my first trip to France, I was wide-eyed. In the first bed and breakfast I stayed at, the owner said I had to make my own crepes. I was taken a bit aback – it's strange to have to make your own breakfast – but it was wonderful.

Then later when I taught French to my students, we made crepes, with instructions in French. It became a grammatical lesson because recipes use the imperative, commands. The food was a huge motivation. We made Madeleines and the kids said they were the best cookies they ever had. This way, the students learned French pleurably. You'll understand why French children look forward to a breakfast (or dessert!) of crepes once you've tried this recipe. Bon appétit, indeed!

Note: A crepe pan is desirable for this recipe because it is designed to flip the crepe with ease. I highly recommend it.

Makes 6 to 8 crepes

Ingredients

1 cup unbleached flour

¼ cup granulated sugar

1 pinch of salt

3 eggs beaten

1 ½ cups milk

1 tablespoon melted butter

1 ½ tablespoons orange-blossom water (optional)

Combine flour, sugar, and salt in a small bowl. In another bigger bowl, combine eggs, milk, melted butter, and orange-blossom water, if desired. Pour in dry ingredients GRADUALLY and beat with an electric beater until smooth. Cover the batter and let it stand for up to 2 hours. Stir the batter just before cooking. Use a ladle to scoop up about ¼ cup of the batter and spread it in the pre-heated and pre-greased crepe pan. Use a circular movement, so it covers the bottom of the pan completely. Cook until brown edges appear on the crepe (about 40 seconds to 1 minute) and then flip with a spatula to brown the other side.

Fill with jam (*crêpe confiture*) or fresh fruit of your choice—berries work great!—and serve with maple syrup and/or cream or yogourt. Use your imagination.

JAMBALAYA - USA

Food was a huge part of how I taught about the Acadians. I wondered, how will I make the kids care about the Acadians? Part of the unit was exploring the food – that was my way of inspiring the kids. This recipe is for a shrimp and spicy sausage jambalaya. You can omit the shrimp and/or sausage and use chicken or ham if you prefer. As they say in New Orleans, “Laissez le bon temps rouler!” (Let the good times roll!)

Serves 6 to 8 hungry people

Ingredients

2 cups water

1 cup short-grain white rice

2 teaspoons salt

2 pounds cooked shrimp (defrosted, if frozen)

6 tablespoons butter

1½ cups finely chopped onions

2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic

1 pound can (454 g) diced tomatoes

3 tablespoons tomato paste

½ cup finely chopped celery

¼ cup finely chopped green pepper

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh (Italian) parsley

3 whole cloves, crushed with a kitchen mallet

½ teaspoon dried thyme

½ teaspoon ground hot red pepper (cayenne) OR to taste

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 pound of spicy Italian, or chorizo sausage, cooked and thinly sliced OR cooked lean smoked ham cut into ½ inch cubes

Boil the water and cook the rice and 1 teaspoon of the salt in a small saucepan. Let simmer for 20 minutes. Fluff with a fork, cover and set aside.

Meanwhile, rinse the shrimp, transfer to a bowl and set aside.

In a large, heavy bottom saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic, constantly stirring for 5 minutes, or until they are soft and translucent but not brown. Add the tomatoes (with the liquid) and the tomato paste. Stir for another 5 minutes. Then add the celery, green pepper, parsley, cloves, thyme, cayenne, black pepper, and the remaining teaspoon of salt. Cook and stir until the vegetables are tender and the mixture is thick.

Add the cooked sausage or ham and stir frequently. Cook for 5 minutes, then stir in the shrimp. When they are heated through, add the reserved rice. Stir over medium heat until the mixture is hot and the rice has absorbed any liquid in the pan.

Taste for seasoning and serve the jambalaya at once, while hot.

SAMOSAS – India and Pakistan

In my neighborhood, there is a little Indian grocery store that has every kind of Indian spice and condiment imaginable. Even though the owner tends to scold her customers for various "offences," I have mustered up the courage to pick her brain when trying to find the best pairing of chutney or sauce to go with my samosas. The owner, when not busy, has been helpful in introducing me to her various selection of great chutneys like coconut, tamarind, tomato, coriander, mint, and mango, just to name a few. The colors are fantastic and my kids love the idea of dipping their "triangles" into a sauce, usually tamarind sauce.

For a first time cook of samosas, I recommend buying samosa wrappers and making your own filling. You'll also need to pick up some dipping sauces - tamarind, coriander, coconut or date chutney - because dipping is half the fun. This recipe is for vegetable samosas because you've never had vegetables like this before.

Makes 18-20 vegetable samosas

Ingredients

20 samosa wrappers (purchased at an Indian grocery store)

3 cloves

½ teaspoon mustard seeds

¼ teaspoon ajma (omum)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

2½ cups small diced potatoes

1¼ cups frozen peas and carrots

2/3 cup frozen corn

½ cup chopped onion

1 teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon powdered garlic

¼ teaspoon powdered ginger

½ teaspoon cumin powder

¼ teaspoon tumeric powder

¼ teaspoon chilli powder

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon sugar

2 tablespoons coriander leaves

¼ teaspoon garam masala

1-2 chopped green hot pepper (or to taste)

3 cups of vegetable oil for frying

Place cloves, mustard, and ajma in 2 tablespoons of oil and heat. Except for the onion, add all vegetables, cover, and cook on low heat until tender. Stir in onion and rest of spices except for the coriander leaves, the garam masala, and hot pepper. Cook until the mixture is dry and thick. Remove pan from heat and set aside to cool. Add coriander, garam masala, and pepper. Discard the whole cloves - remember there are 3 to find!

Wrap samosas according to package instructions and remember, this is going to take some time. Get the whole family wrapping. Have an adult deep fry 6 samosas at a time until they are golden brown (about 2 minutes).