

# It's a Raw Deal



## Let Sushi Roll

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By: Emily Sobecki

If it's the raw fish you're worried about, relax. If it's not knowing what to do with chopsticks, take it easy. If nutrition's your concern, settle in. Sushi's got good news on every front. And if it's the expense that's got you buffaloed well, no, it's not cheap. And no, we're not going to chip in for you. But you don't have to spend a fortune to have a fine sushi meal.

Cities across the country increasingly are blessed with places purveying palatable, pretty, potent plates of sushi. But in 16 years of reviewing restaurants, I've found there's no meal that freaks people out quicker.

That's a raw deal. Sushi is great stuff. Let's demystify it for those still on the fence, and offer some lesser-known tidbits to dabblers. First things first, sushi doesn't require raw fish. It's named for the short-grain rice seasoned with rice vinegar, sugar and salt, and often some dried kelp, used in every piece or bowl of it. (Yes, sometimes sushi comes in a bowl.) For this rice, every detail from the specific rice used, to the humidity of the kitchen, to how the rice is cooled is critical, and experts judge a sushi restaurant largely on the quality of its rice. Raw fish is used in some sushi (served alone, it's called sashimi), but some add only cooked seafood and/or a variety of vegetarian-friendly ingredients. By the way, commercial flash-freezing, used more than you might think, kills what you might worry about. Sushi, properly prepared, is not only safe but remarkably nutritious. Sushi is comparatively low in calories and fat. Estimates vary, but a single piece of nigiri-zushi the name for a pad of sushi rice capped by a piece of fish or other topping ranges from 60 to 90 calories, with less, often much less, than a single gram of fat. One chart is at the entertaining Web site Sushi Encyclopedism: <http://homepage3.nifty.com/maryy/eng/eng.htm>.

It's ok not to know what you're doing in a sushi restaurant or bar. You're not expected to know everything, and you won't get kicked out for doing something wrong. Some places are easier than others for newcomers at these, you can just look curious and someone will offer to help but if you appreciate good food and are willing to ask a few questions, you'll be fine anywhere.



Seaweed has a wide range of vitamins and minerals. It is also contains protein. Seaweed is also a good source of fiber and is low in fat.

# Basic Guidelines On Ordering Sushi

These guidelines will help you not only know how to order sushi but also how to eat it. Once you get the hang of eating sushi, it will be fun and enjoyable.

- 1.** One thing before you even leave the house: Skip wearing fragrance. It'll interfere with the delicate taste. It should go without saying that smoking will, too. Enter your chosen venue and ask for a seat at the sushi bar. You'll often be brought oshibori: a warm hot towel with which to wash your hands. Do so and lay it back on whatever it arrived in.
- 2.** Prepare. Remove the wooden chopsticks from their paper; pull them apart and set them down on the paper, if there are no holders parallel to the edge of the bar. Don't rub them together as some do to remove possible splinters: You're implying they're cheap, and that's insulting. You won't get a splinter. You don't need chopsticks for eating nigiri-zushi (fingers are fine for this "finger-" or "hand-shaped" sushi), but you'll use them to transfer sushi and the pink slices of pickled ginger from the communal plate to yours. Use the ends you don't put in your mouth to do this.
- 3.** You'll also use chopsticks to eat single slices of pickled ginger, called gari, to freshen your palate between pieces of sushi. Don't treat gari like slaw; it's not a salad.

- 4.** Pour a little soy sauce (also called shoyu or mura-saki) from the lidded carafe at your place into the little saucer meant for this. (It'll be obvious.)

## Sushi Tip:

Skip the hot green wasabi paste entirely. Your chef puts this on the sushi as needed. If you like things a little hotter, tell the chef for subsequent orders.

- 5.** Now you're ready to go. Order. Do this by telling the sushi chef, "Omakase" (oh-mah-kah-say), which means you're asking the chef to choose for you always a good idea, since who knows better what's best that day? Just fess up if you're new and you'll get simpler things. Or mark your choices on the paper menu you'll get. Don't order drinks or anything else from the sushi chef: your server will handle that, along with getting you the bill and handling your money.
- 6.** *A final eating tip:* Try to eat nigiri-zushi and slices of maki in one bite. That preserves the balance the chef has created. If you can't finish it in one, at least don't set down the part that's left; hold it while chewing, then eat the rest.



Roe is a type of fish egg used as seafood. Roe is used both as a cooked and raw ingredient. It contains omega-3 fatty acids, which is linked to protect the heart and help improve circulation.



Tamagoyaki, also called tamago, is a type of Japanese omelet. Rolling several layers of cooked egg together makes this type of omelet. A tamago is made by combining eggs, rice vinegar, and either sugar or soy sauce.



Wasabi is a plant member of the Brassicaceae family, which includes, cabbages, horseradish, and mustard. This Japanese horseradish has a flavor that is extremely strong.

## How to Make a Sushi Roll

*Making a sushi roll isn't easy. So we gave you 10 easy steps on how to make this delicious meal.*

- 1. Prepare sushi rice.** Have at least one cup of cooked sushi rice.
- 2. Position sushi mat.** Bamboo rolling mats work the best. Make sure your rolling mat is placed horizontally, if it's placed vertically, you won't be able to roll it.
- 3. Lay nori across sushi mat.** Take a rectangular piece of seaweed and lay it across your sushi rolling mat.
- 4. Moisten your fingers.** This will prevent your fingers from sticking to the rice.
- 5. Transfer rice to mat.** Take the rice and make a ball within the cup of your palm. Place the ball into the middle of the nori sheet.
- 6. Spread rice evenly.** Use your fingers to evenly spread the rice over the nori mat. The more even the rice is, the more rounder the sushi roll will be.
- 7. Add a line of wasabi (optional).** If you like wasabi, use your finger and spread it in a line down the middle horizontally of the nori mat on top of the rice.
- 8. Spread filling in a line.** Spread your choice of the filling across the bottom of the nori. This will make sure it is centered in the final sushi roll.
- 9. Roll the mat.** Roll upward towards the top of the mat. Make a cylinder form while tucking in the nori under to create the roll. But do not roll the sushi mat under while you press, lift the mat as you roll.
- 10. Cut the roll.** Take the sushi out of the mat. Make sure your knife is sharpened and cut into eight pieces.

