

Chef from the Hood Recipes



Chef:

Steve Zhao

Restaurant:

Sushi Tozai (& Peking Chef), Sebastopol, California

Recipe:

California Rolls

Known as a "starter sushi" for those too squeamish to eat raw fish, these rolls or "maki" are Japanese in spirit and California in style... like the Mitsubishis of the sushi world! Sushi Tozai makes 38 styles of maki yet these fresh, flavor-packed rolls appear on almost every table. And why not? You don't have to be a beginner to love them! Recipe makes 6 rolls.

6 squares nori (8" X 7" dried seaweed sheets)
3/4 pound crab meat, drained (Sushi Tozai uses a combination of 80% fresh crab meat and 20% imitation crab (made of pollack) for best flavor in their California Rolls)
1 large, ripe avocado
fresh lemon juice for rubbing the avocado
cooked sushi rice (see recipe below)
4 teaspoons sesame seeds (the light ones)
Wasabi paste, light soy sauce & pickled ginger to accompany the finished rolls at serving time
Bamboo sushi roller recommended for ease of rolling sushi

Cook sushi rice up to 3 hours ahead. Rub peeled avocado with lemon juice, and cut into 1/4" thick strips. Unwrap nori (some chefs recommend that you heat nori in a preheated 350° oven for 5 to 10 minutes to make it more pliable.) Place a sheet of nori on the bamboo roller with the long side facing you. Spread about 3/4 cup of the rice in an even layer on each sheet, leaving a 1/2 inch border on the long sides. Arrange 1/6th of the avocado strips horizontally across the middle of the rice. Add 1/6th of the crab meat on top of the avocado. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Beginning with a long side, and using the bamboo roller to keep the roll at a uniform thickness, roll, encasing filling in nori. If needed, use a moistened finger to seal the nori onto itself (like a fat cigar). Repeat until you have 6 rolls. Cut each roll with a very sharp knife into 3/4 inch thick slices. (Moisten knife in water as needed.) Serve rolls with soy sauce, wasabi paste and sliced pickled ginger.

2 cups short grained rice
2 & 1/2 cups water
4 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teasp. Sake or dry sherry (optional)
scant teaspoon salt

Rinse rice in a sieve until water runs clear. Drain well. Cook in a rice cooker or a pot (follow package directions). Transfer cooked rice to a flat pan, gently spreading rice out in an even layer. In a small pot whisk together vinegar, sake, sugar and salt. Simmer until sugar dissolves. Cool. Sprinkle this syrup over cooked rice, tossing very gently with a flat spoon or paddle. Do not refrigerate; hold up to 3 hours covered with a damp cloth until ready to make rolls.