

# california rolls



## Method

1 Place the rice in a sieve and rinse under cold running water for a few minutes until the water runs clear. Pour the rice into a heavy-based pan and add the measured water. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and bring to the boil over a high heat for 5 minutes. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes until all the water has been absorbed. Remove from the heat and leave to stand, still covered, for 10 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, simmer the vinegar, sugar and salt together in a small, non-metallic pan for a few minutes, stirring, until dissolved. Leave to cool.

3 Spread the rice evenly in a large, shallow dish. Using a wooden spatula, slice (rather than stir) into the rice at the same time as slowly pouring the vinegar mixture over. This will separate the rice grains, dress them evenly and make the rice glossy and sticky. Leave the rice to cool to room temperature.

4 Cover a sushi rolling mat with cling film, tucking the edges underneath. Place a nori leaf on the mat so that it is longer from left to right.

5 Using damp hands, spread one third of the rice evenly over the leaf. Pick up the leaf and quickly turn it over on the mat so that the rice is now face down on the cling film.

6 Smear a little wasabi paste in a line from left to right, down the centre of the nori leaf. Then layer a third of the crab, daikon radish, avocado and salmon roe along the centre.

7 Pick up the near edge of the mat and, with a little pressure, carefully roll the mat over the sushi to meet the other edge. Use your fingers to help keep the filling in place at first. The sushi should form a long roll, the rice being on the outside.

8 Remove the roll from the sushi mat and sit the roll seam side down on a chopping board. Using a dampened sharp knife cut each roll into 4 equal pieces. Repeat with the remaining ingredients to make 12 pieces in total.

9 Serve the California rolls with pickled ginger, wasabi paste and Japanese soy sauce.

Makes 12 sushi pieces

## Ingredients

### SUSHI RICE

- 225 g (9 oz) sushi rice
- 300 ml (10.5 fl oz) water
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) rice vinegar
- 25 g (1 oz) caster sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt

### FILLING

- 3 sheets of nori seaweed, one-third trimmed off lengthways
- 2.5 ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp) wasabi paste
- 125 g (5 oz) white crab meat
- 15 cm (6") piece of daikon radish or cucumber, peeled, halved across and each piece cut into julienne strips
- $\frac{1}{2}$  medium avocado, peeled, stoned and sliced lengthways into thin strips
- 75 g (3 oz) tbsp salmon roe

### TO SERVE

- Pickled ginger
- Wasabi paste
- Japanese soy sauce

# sushi

## sushiscience

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- Preparation is the key to perfect sushi rice. Rinsing it first until the water runs clear will help get rid of excess starch left over from the milling process without changing the starch content of the individual grains, or affecting the way sushi rice sticks together. The best cooking technique is the absorption method – using the minimum amount of water so the grains stay firm rather than turning soggy.
- It may be tempting to lift the lid during cooking, but it's better not to as this will let out steam, which is an important part of the process. Steam helps to ensure all the rice in the pan is cooked evenly. Letting it escape can increase cooking time *and* affect the quality of the result.
- Don't use aluminium pans to cook things with vinegar in them. The acetic acid in the vinegar will react with the aluminium, dissolving it. But this is one chemical reaction that can save on housework. Vinegar is great for cleaning aluminium pans, removing a thin layer of metal, to leave a shiny new surface beneath.
- The amount of fish eaten by the Japanese may be one reason why they suffer lower rates of lung cancer than Westerners, even though rates of smoking are around the same. Oily fish contains Omega-3 fatty acids which have been linked to protection from heart disease, arthritis and the skin condition, psoriasis. The acids have a blood-thinning effect which may help to reduce heart disease and improve circulation.

## sushihistory

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- It's said that sushi originates from the practice of preserving freshwater fish in salt and cooked rice to provide food out of season in Japan. But only the fish was eaten, because the rice didn't keep well.
- The sushi conveyor belt was invented by Yoshiaki Shiraishi in Osaka in 1958. The speed of the belt is crucial. The optimum speed is 8 cm per second. Any faster and the food would dry out or the dishes fly off the belt, any slower and the customer gets bored.
- To be a master sushi chef takes years of training. Apprentices can take up to three years before they even start to make rice. Reaching the stage where you're seen as skilled enough to work at a sushi counter with fish can take anything up to 10 years.