

# Inari Sushi (Inarizushi)

## Description

Inari Sushi, also known as Inarizushi, is a beloved Japanese comfort food consisting of seasoned sushi rice stuffed into sweet and savory aburaage (deep-fried tofu pouches). These golden pockets are named after Inari, the Shinto god of rice and prosperity, whose messenger is said to be the fox—an animal that loves fried tofu. With their perfect balance of sweet, savory, and tangy flavors, Inari Sushi makes an excellent vegetarian option for bento boxes, picnics, or as a light meal.

**Cuisine:** Japanese

---

## Time Required

- **Prep Time:** 20 minutes
  - **Marination Time:** None
  - **Cook Time:** 25 minutes
- 

## Ingredients

### For the Sushi Rice:

1. 2 cups Japanese Short-Grain Rice (uncooked)
2. 2½ cups Water
3. 3 tbsp Rice Vinegar
4. 2 tbsp Sugar
5. 1 tsp Salt

### For the Aburaage (Tofu Pouches):

6. 10 pieces Aburaage (deep-fried tofu pouches)
7. 1½ cups Dashi (Japanese soup stock)
8. 3 tbsp Soy Sauce
9. 3 tbsp Sugar
10. 2 tbsp Mirin
11. 1 tbsp Sake (optional)

### Optional Toppings/Mix-ins:

12. 2 tbsp Toasted Sesame Seeds
13. 1 tbsp Pickled Ginger, finely chopped
14. 2 tbsp Green Onions, finely chopped
15. 1 tbsp Furikake (Japanese rice seasoning)

---

## Instructions

### Preparing the Sushi Rice:

**Step 1:** Rinse the Japanese short-grain rice under cold water 3-4 times until the water runs clear. This removes excess starch and prevents the rice from becoming too sticky.

**Step 2:** Add the rinsed rice and water to a rice cooker or pot. If using a pot, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Turn off heat and let it steam for 10 minutes without opening the lid.

**Step 3:** While the rice is cooking, prepare the sushi vinegar by mixing rice vinegar, sugar, and salt in a small bowl. Stir until the sugar and salt dissolve completely. You can gently heat this mixture to help dissolve faster.

**Step 4:** Transfer the hot cooked rice to a large, shallow bowl (traditionally a wooden hangiri). Pour the sushi vinegar mixture evenly over the rice.

**Step 5:** Using a rice paddle or wooden spoon, gently fold and cut through the rice (do not stir or mash) while fanning it to cool it down quickly. This creates glossy, flavorful sushi rice. Let it cool to room temperature.

### Preparing the Aburaage Pouches:

**Step 6:** Place the aburaage pouches in a colander and pour boiling water over them. This removes excess oil and makes them easier to open. Gently press with paper towels to remove moisture.

**Step 7:** Carefully cut each aburaage pouch in half to create two rectangular pieces. Gently open each piece to form a pocket, being careful not to tear the edges.

**Step 8:** In a medium saucepan, combine dashi, soy sauce, sugar, mirin, and sake (if using). Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar.

**Step 9:** Add the aburaage pouches to the simmering liquid. Place a drop lid (otoshibuta) or a piece of parchment paper directly on top of the pouches to keep them submerged.

**Step 10:** Simmer for 12-15 minutes over low heat until the pouches absorb the sweet-savory flavors and the liquid reduces by about half. Remove from heat and let them cool in the liquid for better flavor absorption.

**Step 11:** Once cooled, gently squeeze each pouch to remove excess liquid (save the liquid for other recipes if desired). The pouches should be moist but not dripping.

### **Assembling the Inari Sushi:**

**Step 12:** If desired, mix optional ingredients (sesame seeds, pickled ginger, green onions, or furikake) into the cooled sushi rice for extra flavor and texture.

**Step 13:** Wet your hands with water to prevent the rice from sticking. Take about 2-3 tablespoons of sushi rice and gently shape it into an oval ball.

**Step 14:** Hold one aburaage pouch open and carefully insert the rice ball. Gently press the rice down and shape it to fit the pouch evenly, filling it about 80-90% full.

**Step 15:** Fold the open edges of the pouch over the rice to create a neat package, or leave it open to show the rice on top (both styles are traditional).

**Step 16:** Repeat with the remaining pouches and rice. Arrange the Inari Sushi on a serving plate with the folded side down.

**Step 17:** Serve at room temperature or slightly chilled. Garnish with additional sesame seeds, pickled ginger, or a sprinkle of furikake if desired.

---

### **Tips**

- For best results, use authentic Japanese short-grain rice—medium or long-grain rice will not have the proper sticky texture
- Pre-made seasoned aburaage pouches (ajitsuke inari age) are available at Asian grocery stores and save significant preparation time
- Don't overfill the pouches—leave a little space at the top so they close easily and look neat
- Wet your hands frequently when handling sushi rice to prevent sticking
- Inari Sushi can be made ahead and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days
- For variety, try adding ingredients like edamame, corn, or finely diced vegetables to the sushi rice
- The leftover simmering liquid from the aburaage is delicious and can be used to flavor other dishes or noodles
- Let the rice cool to room temperature before stuffing—hot rice can make the pouches soggy

**Enjoy your homemade Inari Sushi!**