

ONIGIRI

RECIPE

by Elisa Parhad

The portable, go-to lunch in many parts of the world might be a sandwich, but the Japanese reach for *onigiri*, a delicious and healthy rice and seaweed snack. Parents pack them in bento box lunches, street vendors sell them warm, and convenience store shelves are lined with many different grab-and-go varieties.

Onigiri is a compact, triangular rice ball stuffed with meat or vegetables and wrapped with a kind of dried seaweed paper called *nori*. Classic onigiri varieties include baked salmon, tuna and mayonnaise, sour pickled plums (*ume*), seasoned vegetables, and salted cod roe (*tarako*). The recipe below features salmon, but just like a sandwich, the options for fillings are endless. Whatever way you make them, they are sure to be delicious.

Ingredients

2 cups sushi rice*

1/4 to 1/2 lb. salmon

2 sheets of nori cut into strips

Salt

Sesame seeds or *furikake*, a Japanese rice seasoning (optional)

1. Prepare rice as described on packaging and let cool by flattening cooked rice on a plate and placing in the refrigerator.
2. Pat salmon dry with a paper towel and sprinkle generously with sea salt.
3. Place salmon on a cookie sheet covered in foil and bake for 20-25 minutes at 400° F.
4. After salmon has cooled, break into small chunks and set aside.
5. Wet your hands and cover them with a dash of salt.
6. Place a ball of rice in your palm and flatten slightly.
7. Place a small chunk of salmon inside and cover with more rice. You should have a ball in your hand about the size of your palm.
8. Mold the rice into a compact and rounded triangular shape. Rewet your hands if the rice starts to stick.
9. Wrap the rice with a piece of nori. (You can also cut nori into shapes to create animals or faces.)
10. Sprinkle the sides with furikake or sesame seeds.



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*Regular long-grain white rice, such as jasmine or basmati, cannot be used in this recipe because the grains will not stick together to form a ball. The proper rice to use is sold as Japanese rice, short- or medium-grain rice, or sushi rice.