

Banh Chung (Rice Cake)



Rice cake is our custom dish, which never lacks in Tet Nguyen Dan Lunar New Year of Vietnamese people. At least, Vietnamese people have to prepare a couple of rice cake. Rice cake is in green cover and four-cornered dumpling made of glutinous rice wrapped in rush or bamboo leaves and boiled. By the rice cake legend, it is found in Hung Vuong Empire, when Lang Lieu prince submitted it to the King Hung, he was praised and taken the post. The wrapping works are very painstaking. The sticky rice must be very good and was soaked in water the day before. The pork meat for filling must be pig with full lean, aft and peel. Rice cake is wrapped square, neither tight nor loose. Rice cake should be boiled at once, by wood, wood duct and rice husk is better. In Vietnam, you can enjoy Rice cake at any time, but you can feel it clearly in Nguyen Dan Lunar New Year. At that time, beside the dish of rice cake you could see dishes of lean meat pie, salty onion to eat with. In the tradition of Vietnam, before the New Year one or two day, by the warm fire, the family sit aside telling the past stories and ready for a New Year with hopeful wishes of the best thing.

Here is the direction on how to prepare a Rice cake:

2000 grams of rice
800 grams mung beans
1000 grams of pork
salt
a sprinkle of pepper
Vietnamese Onions

1. Prepare the mung beans the night before by soaking them in water. Drain the mung beans.
2. Prepare the rice by soaking it in cold water for at least 2 hours.
3. Cut pork into pieces, place in a bowl with onions, salt and pepper and mix together.
4. Boil or steam the mung beans with 1 teaspoon of salt until they are soft. Mash the mung beans up until they are like mashed potato.

5. Prepare the wrapping for the cake by placing two pieces of aluminum foil like a cross. Press this into an ice cream container to make it easier to shape.

6. Divide the rice into two portions then divide the mung beans into two portions.

7. Press a layer of the first portion of rice into the container. Make the second layer of mung beans. Spread the pork pieces over the beans. Then another layer of mung beans then the final layer of rice.

8. Fold the foil over the cake so that it looks like a square parcel.

9. Tip this onto another layer of foil and tie it up.

10. Place this sealed parcel into a large saucepan, cover with water and boil gently for 6 hours. Add more water every hour.

11. Carefully remove the saucepan and place in a large strainer. Submerge it in cold water for a few minutes, then gently tip it from side to side to drain off all the liquid.

12. Place the wrapped parcel onto a wooden board and place then place another board on top of it for 2-3 days in a cool place. This will ensure that the cake is firm.

13. Remove the wrapping and serve in pieces or serve cut into slices and fry both sides until brown. Do not grease the pan if you intend to fry. The slices should form a kind of omelet by running together.



With warm moist white rice, a slice of spam, and Nori, Japanese for (dry seaweed) also dehydrated kelp. This is how you create and construct a Simple Sweet Super Spam Musubi.

Ingredients
1-2 lbs white rice
1 can spam
1 packet of Nori (seaweed) sheets

4 tablespoons Shoyu (soy sauce in Japanese) more to taste per piece of spam.

1 tablespoon sugar per piece of spam
pinch or two of salt

Directions

Find a med. size pot or if you have a crock pot/ rice cooker that would be even better, but a pot will do.

Measure and cook the rice.

Remove the spam from container, and cut into thin even rectangular slices (cut the spam horizontally in relation to the chunk of spam standing tall). Slices should be about half a centimeter in thickness/ height, 3-4" long, and 2" wide. Cook spam in mixture of shoyu, sugar, and salt also refer to # 7 below.

Remove Nori sheets from package.

Wash your hands, then when the rice is pau cooking, (Hawaiian for finished) grab about two maybe three handfuls of rice from the pot.

Try your best to mold it into a rectangle with the dimensions, 1" height, 2" width, and 4.5" length.

It's your choice, but in Hawaii we usually broil, boil, or fry the spam in a water, sugar, salt, and shoyu (soy sauce) concoction for the extra local sweet Hawaii flavor.

This next part is a little tricky. Take a single sheet of Nori and measure it with the rice rectangle and make sure it doesn't extend past the two ends of the rice rectangle.

Then lay the nori sheet down and place the piece of spam in the center of the nori so that both "ends" of the spam touch both "sides" of the nori.

Now make sure your rice is all tight and compact so that it doesn't fall apart.

Place the rectangular rice right on top of the rectangle of spam so that you can't see the spam.

Lightly dampen or wet one end of the nori. Wrap dry end of nori half way around the musubi make it tight but not fiercely tight. Then use the part you wet as an adhesive and overlap the first flap and seal the top flap to the bottom with the wet edge.

Sorry for bombarding you with "How To" instructions, but maybe you can paraphrase it. It really isn't as hard as it looks, or sounds. In Hawaii there is such a high demand for Spam Musubis that 2 chefs at a restaurant could whip up 30-100 spam musubis in less than 5 hours. They are really cheap anywhere you buy them, ranging from \$.50-\$1.00.

All the people of Hawaii eat Spam Musubis, even those who are new to the islands get hooked to them. They are consumed all year long, and for those hard core meat lovers, they'll eat them at breakfast lunch or dinner, but in Hawaii people have such a big appetite that it's considered more of a snack or sometimes a pupu (orderve/ appetizer in Hawaiian). People eat them everyday, we sometimes eat two in a day. It is consumed with your hands, so it is somewhat a party food or casual food.

I will give a little history on the spam musubi. Omusubi or musubi (rice ball in Japanese) is a food originally from Japan. It is a triangular patty of rice with nori wrapped around it similar to today's spam musubi, but this has a different surprise, burried in the rice is an Ume, (Japanese pickled plum). So since the Europeans discovered the Pacific and specifically the Hawaiian Islands an array of cultures and peoples began to immigrate to Hawaii. Amongst the many immigrants some of the first came from Polynesia's neighbor Asia including Japan and China. Since we have such a diverse population we also have a wide selection of foods some of which are only found in Hawaii because they are a mixture of different foods. For example the spam musubi is influenced by the Japanese food Omusubi and the western Spam. So when East met West in the Pacific the Spam Musubi was born. Here are some of the many types of foods influenced and brought here by immigrants; starting with the more predominant foods. Samoan, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese, Thai, French, English, Portuguese, Greek, and there are many more, new foods are still being introduced. For example I haven't really seen a whole lot of food or food influence from Germany, Russia, the middle east or Europe, but I can deduce that within a decade there'll be an even wider selection because I already see new people coming here all the time even if they're not here for long. So that's a brief history on the Spam Musubi and a little more.

Adam Kiyosaki

A popular snack food in Japan is the Onigiri or rice balls. It's very simple to make and may be eaten with the hands making it very good snack food. It may be prepared in many different ways with different fillings ranging from pickled plums to cooked fish. While it is often eaten simply as a snack, it may also serve as a starch for any meal.

Rice Balls (Nigiri Sushi)

SUSHI RICE

3 1/3 cups short grain rice

4 cups water, plus 1/4 cup water

6 tablespoons rice vinegar

5 tablespoons sugar

3 teaspoons salt

Rinse rice in water until the water runs clear and then drain in a colander for 1 hour.

Place the drained rice in a rice cooker or in a pot with a tight-fitting lid and add 4 cups water. Over medium heat, cover and bring the water to a boil. Boil for about 2 minutes, reduce heat and allow to simmer for another 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low and cook for about 15 minutes, or until water has been absorbed. Remove from the heat, remove lid, and place a towel over pot. Replace lid and let stand for 10 to 15 minutes.

While the rice cooks, combine vinegar, sugar and remaining 1/4 cup water in a saucepan.

Heat over low temperatures, stirring, until sugar and salt dissolve. Let cool.

Empty rice into a hangiri (or other nonmetallic) tub and spread it evenly over the bottom with a shamoji (or large wooden spoon). Run the spatula through the rice in slicing

motions to separate the grains. While doing this, slowly add vinegar mixture. Add only as much as is necessary; the rice should not be mushy. If you have help, fan the rice with an uchiwa (fan) during the cooling and mixing procedures.

Do not refrigerate the rice. Keep it in the tub covered with a clean cloth until ready to use.

The rice will last one day

Assembly:

Sushi Rice

Omelette pieces

Squeeze the vinegared rice together (into the shape of an ellipse) and place omelette pieces over the top of the rice formation.

Serve with pickled ginger, wasabi and soy sauce as condiments.



-paella

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup [190 mL] white wine
- 12 mussel shells, cleaned
- 1/4 cup [60 mL] oil
- 6 chicken legs
- 1 pork fillet, cut into 1-inch [2.5-cm] thick slices
- 1 pepperoni, sliced
- 2 onions, minced
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 cups [500 mL] white rice
- 3 cups [750 mL] chicken broth
- 1 phial saffron filaments, infused into 1/4 cup [60 mL] hot chicken broth
- 2 green peppers, diced
- 1 [28-ounce / 796-mL] can Italian tomatoes
- 1 bouquet garni [thyme, parsley and bay leaf]
- 1 cooked lobster, cut into bite-size pieces
- 12 cooked shrimps, shelled salt and pepper



PREPARATION

- § Preheat oven to 325°F [160°C].
- § Bring white wine to a boil.
- § Add cleaned mussel shells.
- § Cover and cook until mussel shells open-up.
- § Remove mussel shells from broth; reserve.
- § In a frypan, heat 2 tablespoons [30 mL] of the oil.
- § Fry chicken legs and pork slices until golden brown; reserve.
- § Heat 1 tablespoon [15 mL] of the remaining oil.
- § Fry pepperoni slices; reserve.
- § Heat remaining oil.
- § Melt onion in hot oil, but do not color.
- § Add garlic and rice.
- § Well coat with oil; pour in chicken broth.
- § Transfer into an oven-proof dish.
- § Mix in infused saffron, green pepper dices and tomatoes.
- § Add reserved chicken legs, pork slices and bouquet garni.
- § Bake in preheated oven for 35 minutes.
- § Mix in lobster pieces, shelled shrimps, reserved mussels and pepperoni.
- § Bake for 10 minutes more



This food is usually eat for lunch, with forks and bread.