

## CRISPY SUSHI RICE

OMG, I freeze leftover short-grain rice all the time to make soups and fried rice. But this, this pan-fried, crispy sushi rice, wowza, such a great way to use leftover rice. This is delicious with kelaguen, particularly canned sardine and canned salmon kelaguen. Pan-fried crispy rice is not a traditional Chamorro food that I grew up with, but it's a welcomed addition to my cook's repertoire.

The shaped rice will have to sit in the fridge at least 4 hours to firm and set so that when you turn the rice pieces in the oil, they don't fall apart.

Coconut oil enhances this rice beyond the heavens in taste and aroma, especially if you eat just the rice; of course, you can use your choice of oil. The shaped rice will crisp up once fried, but it will be crispier if you lightly coat the shaped rice just before frying. I used cornstarch though some folks use potato starch. I'll try rice flour next time—at least I know it works for making potstickers more crispy.

You don't need special molds though if you have sushi or musubi molds, it makes shaping easier. Also, you can simply roll rice into a small ball then flatten to a half inch thick and voila, you're good to go.

Once fried, rice will stay crispy about 2 hours.

**Makes 3 full musubi molds—about 15 pieces, and a little ball.**

### ***INGREDIENTS***

#### Set 1

3 cups cooked short-grain rice

1 ½ tablespoons water

#### Set 2

¼ cup rice vinegar

1 tablespoon sugar

#### Set 3

Cornstarch

Coconut oil

***Tools: medium microwave-safe bowl, strainer, rubber spatula, plastic wrap, sushi or musubi molds or empty clean can of SPAM, tongs, two small sheet pans, saucepan, strainer, napkins***

### ***DIRECTIONS***

Place the leftover rice in the bowl and sprinkle 1 ½ tablespoons water over the rice. Put the bowl in the microwave and heat for 90 seconds to rehydrate.

Add the rice vinegar and sugar then scoop and fold to combine. Taste the rice. It should have a pleasing tart and sweet taste for you. If not, add just a splash or two more of rice vinegar, and a few dashes of sugar.

Scoop rice into molds. Press hard on rice to compact the rice into firm mass. Unmold rice and set aside until you have molded the entire batch.

If using a clean can of SPAM, line the can with plastic wrap then load with rice. Use a spoon to press rice firmly. Pull up on plastic wrap to unmold rice. Set aside.

Melt a small bowl of coconut oil. Lay a foot of plastic wrap out. Rub a coating of coconut oil around the center of the plastic wrap—just where it will contact the rice. Wrap the rice securely. Repeat with remaining rice. Set in fridge to firm up for at least 4 hours or overnight.

Line one tray with napkins and set aside.

Remove rice from the fridge then unwrap. Slice into half-inch thickness—one to two bites long—then arrange slices on second tray, without the napkins. Put a small spoon of cornstarch in the sifter. Dust a moderate amount of cornstarch all over the rice; turn the rice over and dust as well.

Though the rice will be crispy without cornstarch, it will be crispier if you use it. The catch with cornstarch is that there may still be a light visible coating on the rice. Eaten fresh within a couple hours, there is no discernable taste; eaten as leftovers by itself, there is a slight starchy taste but it's still good.

Heat a ¼-inch layer of coconut oil in a saucepan on medium heat. When the oil sizzles around a wooden stick or spoon, add the rice pieces. Fry till golden on one side then fry all remaining sides till golden. Remove to the napkin-lined tray to drain.

Serve and plate with kelaguen or whatever your heart desires. It's yummy on its own too!

**Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of [Paulaq.com](http://Paulaq.com).**