

## Rice

We like all kinds of rice, but Haiga Short Grain rice is a staple. It resembles white rice in appearance and cooking time, but has more nutritional value. *Haiga* means “rice germ” in Japanese and describes a modern milling technique that preserves more of the nutritious rice germ (which contains, among other good things, fiber, vitamin B1, B2, B6 and E).

Tamaki Gold Haiga Koshihikari rice (koshihikari is a short grain variety) is farmed in the Sacramento delta, in Northern California, using traditional Japanese farming and modern milling techniques.

A few suggestions:

- Gently rinse the rice so as not to wash out the rice germ
- Once the water runs clear, add water and let it sit for 30 minutes; this is optional, but makes for a more tender rice
- Add a small piece of Kombu kelp to it while it cooks; I do a small square (approximately 3 x 3, but really it is whatever size I manage to break off from the package in the pantry). Discard it after cooking.
- Kombu is one of the main ingredients of Dashi, the Japanese broth in miso soup. It has the highest natural levels of glutamate of any food products. Glutamate acid is responsible for the 5th taste called umami (the others are sweet, sour, salty, and bitter). Umami is an enhancer of flavor and boosts the other tastes.
- It was discovered in the early 20th century and is the basis for MSG, which is a synthetic version.

This rice is used for sushi, but to make “*sushi rice*,” you need to add sushi vinegar, which is essentially rice vinegar with a little added sugar and salt. You can buy it pre-made, or make your own.

To make Sushi Rice Vinegar for 3 cups rice

1/3 cup rice vinegar

3 tbs sugar

1 1/2 tsp salt

Heat until the sugar dissolves. When rice is cooked, put it in a large bowl and add the Sushi vinegar. Mix the rice using a folding technique.