

鮭のおぼろ *SHAKÉ no OBORO* (Seasoned Salmon Flakes), below center.



Ocha-zuké (cucumbers & *shiso* shreds, toasted sesame), above left: Sprinkle salmon flakes over rice; pour tea-*dashi* broth over all. **Omusubi** (rice “sandwiches”), above right: Toss salmon flakes with rice, shape into triangles, wrap with *nori*.

Recipe makes about 1 cup flakes.

1 small slice (about 3 ounces/85 grams with skin and bone) *ama-jio beni-jaké* (lightly-salted “red” salmon) in cold water to cover, plus *kombu* (kelp)

1/2 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon *saké* (rice wine)
1/2 teaspoon *usukuchi shōyu* (light-colored soy sauce)



Rinse the salmon and pat dry. If the slice is too large for your pot, cut into 2 or 3 pieces and place in a small saucepan with just enough cold water to cover the fish (the *kombu* improves flavor). Over medium heat, bring the water to a rolling boil. This will force *aku* (scum) to form on the surface making it easy to remove with a fine-mesh strainer. “Blanch” the salmon for 2 minutes, or until it is just cooked through (color will change; flesh will become opaque). Drain and rinse in cold water. Pat dry.



Separate pink meat from skin, bones and fatty (dark colored) meat. Flake the pink meat by rubbing it between your fingers. Discard skin, bones and fatty meat.



Place flaked salmon in a non-stick pan and sprinkle with the sugar; pour in *saké*. Toss and stir to distribute evenly. “Roast” the salmon slowly over low heat, stirring constantly, to keep it from scorching.



As the salmon begins to dry (about 4 or 5 minutes), drizzle in the *usukuchi shōyu*, stirring vigorously to ensure even distribution. Continue to “roast” while stirring. The salmon will become dry and slightly fluffy, and quite aromatic (about 3-4 minutes). It may even caramelize slightly. Remove the pan from the heat and let the flaky fish cool. If large lumps still exist, rub between your fingers to separate. Refrigerate whatever you do not use right away.

Reading the labels on SALMON...

甘塩紅鮭 *AMA-JIO BENI-JAKÉ* (lightly salt-cured salmon; left below)



生鮭 *NAMA SAKÉ* (fresh, unsalted salmon; above right)

Place 1 cup of cooked rice in each of two small but deep bowls. Various toppings are possible, but the easiest makes use of pre-toasted sesame seeds (about 1/2 teaspoon per portion), scissor-cut slivers or hand-crumbled bits of yaki nori (the paper-thin toasted laver used to roll sushi; a half-sheet of yaki nori should be plenty for 2 portions), well-drained canned tuna fish or salmon, and a dab of wasabi paste. If you have some umeboshi (pickled plums) on hand, pull the flesh off of the pit and use it instead of the fish. Chopped watercress or radish sprouts make a fine accent, too.

When toppings are in place, return the strained tea broth to the stove, heating it until scalding hot. Don't allow it to boil, though, or it will become bitter and astringent. Season the broth with a pinch of salt, or a drizzle of light-colored soy sauce, and pour over the rice and toppings.

Stir, slurp, and enjoy!

Ocha-zuké Broth (tea-and-kombu stock) 茶漬け出汁 *cha-zuké dashi*

Serves 4.

3 to 4-inch piece *dashi kombu* (dried kelp for stock-making)

2 tablespoons *ryoku cha* (loose green tea)

2 to 3 cups cold water

2 tablespoons/3 grams *katsuo-bushi* fish flakes, OPTIONAL

a pinch of salt, or a drizzle of light-colored soy sauce



Start by making a tap-water infusion of green tea broth in a 2 or 3-quart (18 cm diameter) sized saucepan. Using disposable tea “bags” (paper filters shaped as a bag to fill with loose tea leaves; above left, available at all 100 yen shops in Japan) simplifies cleanup, though tea and kelp can be placed loose in a pot and the broth strained later.

Allow the tea and kelp to steep for at least 10 minutes but no more than an hour before placing it over low heat. Barely bring the tea mixture in the saucepan to a boil. As bubbles begin to form at the outer edge, remove the pan from the stove. Season the broth with a pinch of salt, or a drizzle of light-colored soy sauce.

If you want a smoky-flavored broth, add *katsuo-bushi* fish flakes to the pot. Allow the flakes to infuse the broth for about 1 minute before straining through a fine-woven cloth or a paper coffee filter.

Cha-zuké dashi can be kept, refrigerated, for 2 days.

Reheat **GENTLY** before using.

DO NOT let it boil.

