

Rice Bowl with Sausage

In the Japanese tradition of *chirashi*, bowls of sushi rice have all sorts of ingredient combinations scattered on top. This one is not at all Japanese, although the flavors can go in any direction you like; see the variations.

Ingredients

1 ½ cups short-grain
white rice

Salt

2 tablespoons olive oil, plus
more for drizzling

1 pound hot or sweet Italian
sausage links

2 large fennel bulbs

Pepper

4 ounces Parmesan cheese
(1 cup shaved)

Several sprigs fresh basil for
garnish

Prep | Cook

1. Put 1 ½ cups rice in a medium saucepan; add a big pinch of salt and water to cover by about an inch. Bring to a boil.
2. Put 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Cut the sausages into slices; add them to the skillet. Trim and slice the fennel; add it to the skillet.
3. Sprinkle the sausage and fennel with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally until the sausage is browned and the fennel is golden, 10 to 15 minutes.
4. When the water boils, adjust the heat so the mixture bubbles steadily but not vigorously. Cover and cook, undisturbed, until small craters appear on the surface, 10 to 15 minutes. Shave 1 cup Parmesan cheese with a vegetable peeler. Strip the basil leaves from several sprigs and chop.
5. When small craters appear on the surface of the rice, tip the pot to see if any liquid remains. If so, cover and keep cooking until the rice is dry, checking every minute or 2.

6. Divide the rice among 4 bowls, and spoon the sausage and fennel over the top. Garnish with the Parmesan and basil, and a drizzle of olive oil if you like, and serve.

VARIATIONS

Rice Bowl with Chorizo and Pineapple

Substitute fresh Mexican chorizo for the Italian sausage and 2 medium red onions for the fennel. When the chorizo and onions are a few minutes shy of being done, stir in 1 cup chopped pineapple. Use queso fresco instead of Parmesan and cilantro instead of basil.

Rice Bowl with Andouille

Use andouille or another spicy sausage instead of Italian sausage and 2 small red bell peppers and 1 cup corn kernels instead of fennel. Skip the cheese and garnish with scallions instead of basil.

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