



# Transporting Take Away Food the Japanese Way

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How do people from Japan transport their food?

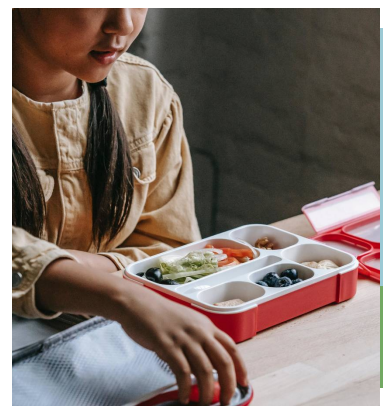
In Japan, meals are usually served in many different bowls, so that everybody can take what they like. In order to be able to combine that freely even when away from home, the Bentō-box was invented („bentō“ refers to both box and content). That's a type of wooden lunchbox with 4 to 6 compartments, containing diverse content such as rice, fish or vegetables.

Traditionally bentō boxes were used as early as the 5th century. Back then they were made of bamboo pipes and pretty useful for fights, being on the chase or working on the field, since food was available all the time.

It's important that food is arranged nicely in the bentō box. In the middle of the 20th century one way to do this, called „hinomaru bentō“ was rather popular. A red, pickled plum („umeboshi“) was settled on white rice, symbolising the Japanese flag. Many mums even make little animals or plants or even characters from video games or animes and manga out of the food. This style of decorating is called „kyaraben“ (short for „character“ and „bentō“).

Another typically Japanese way to wrap food is using „nori“. These are paper liked leafs of deep sea algae and are used for many traditional Japanese dishes, such as „sushi“ and „onigiri“ (small spiced rice balls often coated in nori algae so that you can better grasp them).

The cherry blossom feast („hanami“) is a picnic party under the blossoming cherry trees („sakura“) which are well spread all over Japan. Originally it means „flower show“ or „regarding flowers“, but the term has been more often used in relation to the picnic. At that time nearly everybody in Japan meet up with friends, neighbours and family in the park, enjoying their food from their bentō boxes.





# Making Onigiri

## Recipe

If you now want to design your own bentō box, just order one online – or create one from different sized bread boxes. Steamed vegetables and rice are always a good fit to fill in some of the compartments. But in order to make it even cooler, try out this onigiri recipe – have fun cooking!

What you need:

rice:  
300g sushi rice (Japanese rice)  
2 tbs rice vinegar  
1 tsp cane sugar  
½ tsp salt  
1 tbs sesame seeds, dark  
2 leaves nori algae

**avocado filling:**  
1 avocado  
80g cucumber  
50g cream cheese  
1 tsp wasabi paste

**salmon filling:**  
100g salmon  
1 spring onion  
1 pc. lime  
3 tbs mayonnaise  
1 tbs teriyaki sauce

Cook the rice. In the meantime thoroughly mix and slightly heat vinegar, sugar and salt until the sugar has resolved. Stir into the ready cooked rice, add sesame. Put aside to cool.

Chop avocado and cucumber into small pieces, mix with wasabi and cream cheese.

Cut salmon into tiny dice, spring onion into delicate rings. Chop lime in half and press juice into a drinking glass. Mix lime juice, mayonnaise and teriyaki sauce and add salmon and spring onion.

Roast the nori leaf in a pan from one side only until it starts to smell nicely, take out, let cool and cut into 2,5-3 cm wide stripes.

Split the rice into two equally sized portions. Moisten your hands with water and form a little bit of rice into a triangular shape, pressing a little hollow to its middle with your finger. Add the avocado or salmon filling, depending on which one you made, into that little dip and cover with rice. Improve triangular shape, wrap in a nori stripe. Here's your first onigiri!

