

Rolled Omelet, Two Ways
東京風厚玉子焼き・関西風だし巻き玉子
Tokyo Style, *Atsu Tamago Yaki* and Kansai Style, *Dashi Maki Tamago*



A classic in the *washoku* kitchen, thick, rolled omelets are made by cooking a seasoned egg mixture, layer by layer, in a pan – preferably a square or rectangular-shaped one. The resulting block, or log, of omelet is a favorite in *obentō* lunches. Slices of rolled omelet also appear at the sushi bar where they are nick-named *gyoku*, or jewel (an alternate reading of the first calligraphy in the pair *tama* and *go* that means “egg”).

It is possible to add fillings to these rolled omelets in two ways: scattered throughout the egg mixture to create the effect of confetti (above, center), or laid flat over the second or third layer of poured egg mixture to create a swirl pattern when rolled up (above, left).

Rolled Omelet, **Tokyo Style:** *Atsu Tamago Yaki*
厚玉子焼き

The Tokyo version of thick, rolled omelet, *atsu tamago yaki*, is robustly flavored though rather sweet. Some Tokyo cooks finish their omelets with a caramelized outer surface. When this omelet is served as part of a larger meal, in lieu of a grilled fish or piece of meat, a mound of grated radish, drizzled with soy sauce, helps to tone down the sweetness of the dish (above, right). In Japan, omelets such as these are typically served at room temperature, though you may prefer to serve them piping hot – or chilled. They will keep for 3-4 days if covered and refrigerated.

Makes 1 roll, cut into 8-10.

A single portion is typically 2 pieces, unless the omelet is served as a main course, in which case it makes 2 servings of 5 pieces each.

Ingredients:

- 3 jumbo-sized eggs
- 3 tablespoons *dashi* stock
- 1 tablespoon *saké*
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- vegetable oil, for seasoning pan
- 1- inch chunk of *daikon* radish, about 2 ounces, optional
- 1 teaspoon *shōyu* soy sauce, optional

Break the eggs into a bowl and season with the *dashi*, *saké*, sugar and salt. Beat just enough to break the viscous nature of the whites but try not to incorporate air as you do this. Air bubbles create an unattractive, pock-marked surface.

To avoid unattractive white streaks in an otherwise yellow omelet, strain the mixture through a sieve. You should have a generous cup of the egg mixture.



Use a *tamago yaki nabé* pan to simplify the task of shaping omelets into square or rectangular blocks.

Heat your pan over medium heat and oil it lightly. If you feel comfortable using chopsticks as a cooking tool, the easiest way to oil your pan is with a small wad of paper toweling that has been dipped in vegetable oil. If not, try using a pastry brush dipped in oil. Be sure to swab the corners and sides of the pan since those are the spots where egg typically sticks, causing problems in forming a neat shape.



Test the temperature of your pan by gently placing the point of a chopstick, or tines of a fork, that has been dipped in the egg mixture on the inner surface of the skillet. Ideally, as the egg-dipped tip touches the hot pan, the egg will jump up and stick to the chopstick or fork, coming cleanly away from the pan. If, the egg sticks to the pan, you need to heat your pan further. If, the egg on the tip of your chopstick or fork caramelizes, remove the pan from the source of heat and lower the heat slightly. Using the oil-dipped wad of paper towel, or pastry brush, to swab the pan again.

When the pan is ready, pour in a scant 1/4 cup of the egg mixture, gently, but in a steady flow. With calm, smooth, wrist motions, swirl the egg mixture to coat the surface of the pan evenly. Keep the egg mixture in motion, by repeated gentle wrist action, until it no longer flows. Cook the egg over medium heat until the edges seem to dry a bit. Remove the skillet from the source of heat and let the egg sheet cook by retained heat for another 20-30 seconds before beginning to roll it up.



Using a square or rectangular pan (4 and 1/2 inches by 7 inches is ideal), start at the back of the pan, flipping and rolling the egg mass forward. The Japanese use chopsticks to accomplish this, but a heat-resistant spatula is also useful. Swab the back of the pan lightly with oiled paper towel or a pastry brush dipped in oil before pushing the rolled egg to the back of your pan. Swab the front of the pan lightly with oil.



To make the second layer, pour another 1/4 cup of the egg mixture into the pan, gently but all at once. If you are using a square or rectangular pan, lift the rolled egg at the back of your pan to allow the fresh egg mixture to flow under it.

Swirl this freshly poured egg mixture to cover the front surface of the pan evenly. Keep it over medium heat until the edges seem to dry a bit. Remove the pan from the source of heat and roll the egg mass to the front of the pan and let it cook by retained heat for another 20-30 seconds. Swab the back of the pan lightly with oiled paper towel or a pastry brush dipped in oil before pushing the rolled egg to the back of your pan. Repeat to make 3 or 4 more layers, until the egg mixture is used up.

Carefully shape the final layer to make an even “log” or roll. In Tokyo, this outer surface is caramelized in spots, intentionally. Flip the finished omelet out onto your cutting board or a flat plate. To avoid tearing the omelet, let it cool slightly before slicing it. If your roll or block is more than 2 inches wide (it should measure the same as the width or diameter of your pan), slice it in half, lengthwise before cutting across three or four times to create 8 or 10 slices. If you have made a



SEARING DESIGNS on OMELETS:



The sugar in the egg mixture caramelizes when a red-hot branding iron is placed on the omelet's surface. The branding irons come in many patterns and configurations and can be found in several stores in Kappabashi.

Left top: the KOTOBUKI calligraphy used on congratulatory occasions.
LEFT bottom: Sushi Cho (name of a restaurant)

Rolled Omelet, Kansai Style
Dashi Maki Tamago
だし巻き玉子



The Kansai (Osaka and Kyoto) version of thick rolled omelet is pale yellow and quite savory. Because this version is softer and more pliable than the Tokyo style, *dashi tamago yaki* can be coaxed into various shapes while still warm. Slices of these decoratively configured omelet are often included in elegant boxed *obentō* lunches. *Hyōtan* (gourd) shape is especially popular.

Makes 1 roll, cut into 8-10 pieces. A single portion is typically 2 pieces, unless the omelet is served as a main course, in which case it makes 2 servings of 5 pieces each.

- 3 jumbo-sized eggs
- 1/3 cup *dashi*
- 1 tablespoon *saké*
- 1 teaspoon *mirin* (syrupy rice wine)
- 1/4 teaspoon *usukuchi shōyu* (light-colored soy sauce)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- vegetable oil, for seasoning pan

Seasoning the egg mixture, selecting and preparing your skillet, and cooking the Kansai version of rolled omelet is essentially the same procedure and technique as is described in the preceding recipe for the Tokyo Style version. The difference lies primarily in the balance of flavors in the egg mixture. Break the eggs into a bowl and season with the stock, rice wine, *mirin*, *usukuchi shōyu*, and salt. Beat just enough to break the viscous nature of the whites but try not to incorporate air as you do this. To avoid unattractive white streaks in an otherwise yellow omelet, strain the mixture through a sieve. You should have a generous cup of the egg mixture.

Follow the instructions for the Tokyo Style Rolled Omelet (above) to make the more savory Kansai version. As with the sweeter, Tokyo-style omelet, it will be easier to shape the omelet into a square or rectangular block using a *tamago yaki nabé* pan. Slice the finished rolled omelet crosswise, into 8-10 slices.

The savory version of rolled omelet rarely has other ingredients added to the egg mixture. However, the final log is sometimes formed into a gourd shape (*hyōtan*) with a tool called a *sudaré* or slatted mat. Omelets such as these are typically served at room temperature. They will keep for 3-4 days if covered and refrigerated.

MAKING GOURD-SHAPED OMELETS:



While still warm, the savory rolled omelet can be shaped to look like a gourd (*hyōtan*). Lay a *sudaré* on a flat surface, rounded slats facing up (flat surface facing down). Slats should be horizontally aligned. Place the rolled egg across the mat, parallel to the slats, not far from edge nearest you.

Lift the mat and roll it away from you to enclose the egg. Lift the top of the mat to re-adjust and tighten the roll. This is the same motion you see chefs at the sushi bar use to make thick rolled sushi.



Place long chopsticks as pictured above and secure them with rubberbands. Let the omelet sit for at least 30 minutes, and up to several hours, covered with clear plastic wrap, in the refrigerator. As the egg cools, pressure from the chopsticks creates an indent. A pattern of lines from the slatted mat will remain on the surface. Unwrap, and slice to make 8-10 “gourds.”