

Japanese Salted Salmon (Shiojake/Shiozake)

by Namiko Hirasawa Chen

In this easy Japanese Salted Salmon (*Shiozake/Shiojake*) recipe, I'll teach you how to cut, salt, and broil your own Japanese-style salmon fillets. Enjoy this flavorful fish with crispy skin as a filling for rice balls, in a bento lunchbox, or as the wholesome centerpiece of a traditional Japanese breakfast.



🕒 **Prep:** 10 mins 🕒 **Cook:** 10 mins 🕒 **Marinating:** 2 d 🕒 **Total:** 20 mins

Servings: 6 Japanese-style fillets (with 3 additional odd-sized pieces)

Ingredients

- 450 g **skin-on Japanese-style salmon fillets** (store bought or cut your own; I sliced the entire **left** side of wild sockeye salmon from Costco; I recommend firm and lean sockeye salmon for this recipe, but I've also used fatty Atlantic salmon)
- 0.75–1.5 Tbsp **sake**
- 22.5 g **Diamond Crystal kosher salt (5% of the salmon's weight in salt of any kind;** I used 30 g salt for 600 g salmon; 1 Tbsp Diamond Crystal salt weighs 10 g)

For Serving

- 3.75 cm **daikon radish**

Instructions

1. **Before You Start:** Please note that this recipe has a **curing time of 2 days**.

To Cut the Fillets (optional)

1. Here's a brief overview of how to cut a side of salmon into Japanese-style fillets (skip ahead if using store-bought fillets): Place the salmon **skin side down** with the narrow **tail end to your left** (the head end is wider). Cut off the tail's narrowest part, which is too small for Japanese-style fillets. Then, **tilt your knife back 30 degrees** and slice the salmon **diagonally toward the tail end** about 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick.

Nami's Tip: For detailed instructions with photos, see my tutorial [How to Cut Salmon into Japanese-Style Fillets](#).



2. This 1.3 lb (600 g) side of sockeye salmon yielded 8 Japanese-style fillets and 3 additional odd-sized pieces.



To Salt the Salmon

1. Evenly sprinkle **0.75–1.5 Tbsp sake** on **450 g skin-on Japanese-style salmon fillets** and coat well. Set aside

for 10 minutes.



2. After 10 minutes, pat the salmon dry with a paper towel.



3. Sprinkle **some of the 22.5 g Diamond Crystal kosher salt** on the skin. Then, sprinkle **the remainder of the salt** on both sides of the fillets.

Nami's Tip: I use 5% of the salmon's weight in salt. In Japan, the salt concentration ranges from 3% to 8% or more; see the blog post for more information.



4. If you have any leftover salt, press it onto the skin with your hand.



To Pack and Marinate

1. Line the bottom of an airtight container with a paper towel to absorb the moisture released from the fish. Place a few salted fillets in the container in a single layer. Then, lay another paper towel on top.



2. Repeat for the second and third layers of fillets, as needed.



3. Lay a final sheet of paper towel on top. Cover with the lid and keep in the refrigerator for **2 days**.



After 2 Days

1. Open the container after 2 days. You'll see that the salt has drawn out the moisture from the salmon. The fillets are darker in color and firmer in texture. Discard the wet paper towels.



2. Gently pat the fillets with a dry paper towel to absorb any excess moisture. The salted salmon fillets are now ready to use. To cook them now, jump to the "To Broil" section. To freeze the fillets to use later, continue with the next step.



To Freeze for Later (optional)

1. If you don't plan on cooking the salmon now, wrap the individual pieces in plastic. In the next step, I'll show you how I wrap two fillets together, as I often need two for bento boxes or four for a family meal. When wrapping, make sure the two fillets are separated by a layer of plastic so they don't fuse together when frozen. This is helpful when you need to take out just one frozen fillet.



2. Set a fillet on top of a sheet of plastic wrap and fold over one edge to completely cover the salmon. Then, put the second fillet next to the first piece and separated by a layer of plastic film. Continue to wrap the salmon fillets tightly.



3. Repeat wrapping the remaining fillets the same way. Put them in a freezer bag. You can store them in the freezer for up to 1 month.



To Defrost the Frozen Fillets

1. The night before cooking the salmon, completely defrost the frozen fillets (still in plastic wrap) in the refrigerator overnight. Before cooking, let the salmon sit out on the counter for **15 to 20 minutes** to warm up to room temperature. Do not let it sit out for too long. When you're ready to cook, gather the ingredients. Here, I will cook two fillets.



To Broil (recommended)

1. Preheat the oven broiler on **High** (550°F/288°C) for 5 minutes. Place the oven rack in the center position, about 9 inches (23 cm) away from the top heating element. Line a baking sheet with foil for easy clean up and grease it with (spray) cooking oil. Place the salmon on the foil, skin side up (for crispy skin).

Nami's Tip: When broiling, you don't control the temperature in the oven; instead, you **control the distance between the broiler and the surface of the food**. It's similar to using hotter and cooler zones on your grill.



2. Broil the salmon for 8–10 minutes. Please remember that the **cooking time varies** depending on the thickness of the fish and the distance between the broiler and the food. Cook the Japanese salted salmon to well done (more dry and flaky). You do not need to flip it.



To Bake (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to **425°F (218°C)** with the rack placed in the middle position. Bake the salmon on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper for 10–12 minutes. Cook the shiozake until well done (more dry and flaky).

To Grill (optional)

1. Cook the fillets on a wire fish grill on medium heat over a stovetop or direct fire, about 5 minutes on each side. Cook until well done (more dry and flaky).



To Serve

1. Peel the skin from **3.75 cm daikon radish** and grate the daikon (I use a ceramic grater). Gently squeeze out most of the liquid but keep it moist.



2. Serve the broiled salmon with grated daikon on the side. I also served Tamagoyaki (Japanese Sweet Rolled Omelet) and Spinach Salad with Sesame Dressing in this meal.



To Store

1. Keep the leftover cooked salmon in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days and in the freezer (if not previously frozen) for 2 weeks.

Nutrition

Calories: 108kcal, **Carbohydrates:** 1g, **Protein:** 15g, **Fat:** 5g, **Saturated Fat:** 1g, **Polyunsaturated Fat:** 2g, **Monounsaturated Fat:** 2g, **Cholesterol:** 41mg, **Sodium:** 665mg, **Potassium:** 385mg, **Fiber:** 1g, **Sugar:** 1g, **Vitamin A:** 30IU, **Vitamin C:** 2mg, **Calcium:** 11mg, **Iron:** 1mg

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