

Omura-Zushi

The signature sushi of Omura is said to date back to the triumphant return of Omura's lord after years in exile. Omura-zushi is a type of layered and pressed sushi (*oshizushi*) that dates from the fifteenth century.

According to local lore, the dish was first served in 1480 to celebrate the return of lord Omura Sumikore (dates unknown) after he regained control of the Omura lands in battle. He had been defeated seven years earlier by the Arima family, who controlled the Shimabara Peninsula and part of modern-day Saga Prefecture. The story goes that the people of Omura wanted to celebrate their lord's long-awaited victory, but were caught by surprise at the speed of his return. Lacking enough dishes to serve the returning forces, resourceful locals used shallow wooden boxes to serve rice layered with ingredients they had on hand.

Omura-zushi typically has ingredients cooked in sweetened soy sauce such as finely chopped shiitake mushroom, carrot, burdock root, and lotus root between two layers of rice. The sushi is often topped with slices of cured and steamed *kamaboko* (a type of fish paste) colored pink and green, and strips of thinly sliced omelet. It is served in Omura and across Nagasaki Prefecture, including at the Umegae-so restaurant within Omura Park.