

WATERMELON SUSHI WITH FRIED SHALLOTS AND GINGER LIME DRESSING

Yield: 4 Portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Watermelon, red mini seedless	1 ea.
<i>Marinade</i>	
Soy sauce	1/3 cup
Sugar	1/4 cup
Salt	1/4 tsp.
Ginger, minced	1 1/2 Tbsp.
Thai chilies or red serrano, minced	1 tsp.
Lime juice, freshly squeezed	1 1/2 Tbsp.
Mirin or rice wine	1 1/2 Tbsp.
Sesame seeds, toasted	1 Tbsp.
<i>Garnish</i>	
Shallots, thinly sliced	3 ea.
Canola oil	as needed
Red perilla, Thai basil, cilantro, and/or shiso	2/3 cup
Sriracha sauce (optional)	1 Tbsp.
Pine nuts or sesame seeds, toasted (optional)	2 Tbsp.

Method

1. Cut watermelon into 3 logs about 2"x2"x8" wide. Using a serrated peeler, run serrated vegetable peeler (or use a julienne blade from Japanese mandolin) across the top and 2 sides, making serrated marks. Cut each log into 8 sushi shape pieces about 1" wide. Dab watermelon with paper towels to remove excess moisture. Transfer to glass tray.
2. *For the marinade:* Combine all marinade ingredients.
3. Drizzle half of the marinade on watermelon cubes and set aside to chill and marinate for 15 minutes.
4. *For the garnish:* Fry shallots in canola oil until crispy. Thinly slice Red Perilla, Thai basil, and/or cilantro to 1/8" inch (can be left whole if small).
5. To serve, remove watermelon pieces from marinade. Discard the marinade. Per portion, arrange six watermelon pieces in an attractive row on plate. Garnish with fried shallots, shredded perilla or shiso, and pine nuts or sesame seeds. Squeeze a few dots of Sriracha sauce on plate. If desired, drizzle remaining marinade on top.

Note: At a distance, these elegant watermelon chunks look like tuna. Topped with aromatic herbs, crispy, savory fried shallots, and dots of heat from Sriracha sauce, it's an unexpected delightful taste experience. It also shows just how versatile watermelon can be!

Source: Chef Mai Pham, Star Ginger and Lemon Grass Kitchen, www.starginger.com