



Yakitori Chicken Skewers with Asian Cucumber Salad

Makes: 2-3 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes plus marinate time 30 minutes

Ingredients

Yakatori Chicken Skewers:

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 6 long bamboo skewers, soaked in water for 20 minutes before using
- 1/2 cup soy sauce, regular or low-sodium
- 1/2 cup Mirin (Japanese Rice Wine)
- 2 tbsp white sugar
- 1 clove garlic, finely grated (optional)
- 1/2 tsp fresh ginger, finely grated (optional)

Asian Cucumber Salad:

- 1/2 English cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1/4 red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup unseasoned rice wine vinegar, or seasoned and reduce the added sugar and salt below a bit
- 1 tsp brown sugar, or white sugar
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 1/2 tsp sesame oil, regular or toasted
- 1/8 - 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Instructions

Make the Sauce:

Add the soy sauce, Mirin, white sugar and garlic and ginger (if using) to a small saucepan and stir together. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, then reduce heat to medium low (or lower, if needed, to allow for a gentle simmer) and allow the mixture to simmer until the mixture reduces by about 1/2, has a nice gloss to it and thickens just slightly (about 10-15 minutes).

Remove mixture to a bowl and allow to stand at room temperature until completely cooled. (Never add raw chicken to hot or even slightly warm sauce! You'll need about 30-45 minutes for the sauce to cool completely, so plan ahead.)

Prepare the Chicken Thighs:

Unfold the chicken thighs and cut into 3 pieces/strips. (When you unfold the chicken thigh, there is a thinner 1/3 piece that is a natural to cut into one strip, then cut the remaining piece into 2 strips). Repeat with all the chicken thighs and place into a bowl. Set aside or refrigerate until needed.

Once sauce has cooled, remove 2-3 tablespoons of the sauce mixture to a small bowl, cover and refrigerate separately from the chicken. Add the remaining sauce to the prepared chicken, stir to coat well, then cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes or up to 8 hours. (If you have the time, a longer marinating time is best. I aim for at least 4 hours, when I can).

Soak the bamboo skewers in water for 20 minutes before using.

When ready to cook, thread the marinated chicken pieces onto the soaked skewers, threading 3 pieces onto each skewer and threading lengthwise, catching both ends of the chicken strip, then spreading out fully along the skewer. Repeat with remaining chicken and skewers. Reserve remaining marinade for basting during cooking.

For oven method: Preheat oven to 425F. Place skewers onto a baking sheet and cook in preheated oven for about 18-20 minutes, basting well with reserved marinade after 10 minutes of cooking.

For BBQ method: Preheat bbq to about 375-400F. Place skewers on top rack and close the BBQ lid. Allow to cook 8-10 minutes, then baste well with reserved marinade. Close lid and cook a few minutes longer. Finish by placing the skewers on the grate, over the flame for a minute or two to brown slightly. Remove skewers from oven or grill and brush with the bit of sauce that was reserved separately from the chicken (NOT the sauce used to marinate the chicken, but the sauce you set aside at the start!). The sauce may have thickened up if refrigerated, but just brush it on the hot chicken and all will be good, as the heat from the chicken will loosen it up nicely and provide a wonderful glaze.

For the Cucumber Salad:

Thinly slice the cucumber and red onion and place into a medium bowl. Make the vinaigrette by whisking together the remaining ingredients and pouring over the cucumber/red onion mixture. Toss to combine well. Allow to stand about 15 minutes at room temperature before serving.

Recipe by Seasons & Suppers