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CHICKEN ON A SKEWER (YAKITORI)

Yakitori at its simplest is a chicken shish kabab with a very Japanese flavor. Pieces of dark meat are served either by themselves, neatly speared onto the ends of small bamboo skewers (three makes a serving), or interspersed with bits of green bell pepper or scallion. As the meat is grilled, it is dipped into a sweetened soy-based sauce. The servings are tantalizingly small, but you can have as many as you want. If you are hungry enough for a full meal, you can serve *yakitori* on a bowl of rice with tea and pickles on the side.

4 medium chicken legs (thighs and drumsticks), boned
1 large green bell pepper
8 tablespoons Japanese soy sauce (*shoyu*)
4 tablespoons sake
3 tablespoons sugar

1. Cut the boneless chicken leg meat into 1-inch chunks. If some skin separates from the meat, discard it; leave any skin that clings naturally. Halve, core and deseed the bell pepper, then cut it into 1-inch squares.
2. Thread two pieces of meat on to a skewer followed by a piece of bell pepper. If you are preparing bamboo skewers, Japanese-style, push the meat to one end and keep alternating two pieces of meat with a piece of pepper until you have loaded about 3 inches of each skewer. If you are using long metal skewers, you can thread their entire length, leaving each end empty. Thread all the meat in this way, using as many skewers as required. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until needed.
3. Meanwhile combine the soy sauce, sake, and sugar in a small pan and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved.
4. Preheat an indoor broiler or an outdoor charcoal grill. Position the skewers 4 to 5 inches from the heat source and grill for 4 to 5 minutes on each side or until the meat is three-quarters cooked. Brush with the sauce and grill briefly on both sides until the meat is almost done. Brush with the sauce a second time and grill for another 30 seconds on each side. Serve hot.

Makes 4 main course servings, or up to 8 with drinks.

Madhur Jaffrey's Step-by-Step Cooking

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Madhur Jaffrey
Ecco

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