

Ume Chicken Skewers

From Akira Komine at Kirala in Berkeley.

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup low-sodium pickled ume, pitted (see Note)
 - 3 tablespoons Japanese mirin (rice wine)
 - 1 pinch dried bonito flakes (see Note)
 - Granulated sugar to taste
 - 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
 - Garlic salt and black pepper to taste
 - Fresh shiso, rolled and sliced thinly (see Note)
 - 15-20 bamboo skewers, soaked in water 30 minutes
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INSTRUCTIONS: Put ume in a blender. Add mirin and bonito flakes; mix until well blended. Taste and adjust seasoning for sweetness (to counter saltiness of ume) with sugar. Set sauce aside.

Slice chicken breasts ½-inch thick, then slice to approximately 1½-inch wide by 6 inches long. Heat a grill or a grill pan. Skewer chicken and season with garlic salt and pepper. Grill until just done, approximately 3 minutes per side on high heat. To serve, brush one side of skewer with sauce and sprinkle with a generous amount of shiso.

Note: Shiso (a large leafy herb), ume and bonito flakes are available in Japanese markets. Ume brands vary greatly in saltiness and sweetness, even if labeled low sodium. Taste the ume by itself before adjusting seasonings to finish the sauce.

Yields about 20 skewers

PER SKEWER: 60 calories, 11 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate, 1 g fat (0 saturated), 27 mg cholesterol, 0 fiber.

Because ume brands vary greatly in saltiness, the sodium content is not included in this analysis.