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Bite-size chicken teriyaki for bento boxes

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Usually chicken teriyaki (or *chikiteri* as it's abbreviated sometimes) is made from whole chicken thigh pieces, but I prefer to cut the meat up in advance for bento use - the smaller pieces cook faster, and I don't have to deal with slicing hot cooked meat early in the morning.

The chicken can be marinated from the night before or just briefly in the morning. You can also make this in some quantity and freeze the cooked pieces - since you are using thigh meat, the pieces won't dry out so easily after defrosting like white meat can.

I like to leave the skin on, but you can peel it off if you prefer, either before or (preferably) after cooking.

This is a much simpler marinade than the one I've given for teriyaki previously, but just as tasty.

Recipe: Bite-size chicken teriyaki

The chicken thighs I buy usually have about 80 to 90 grams of meat and skin on them (around 3 ounces). Since chicken sizes can vary a lot from country to country, I've given weights instead of '4 chicken thighs' etc. But you can't really go much wrong with this recipe, so don't worry.

This recipe will make enough pieces for 4 bentos, Make more or less as you require.

- 270 grams / 9 1/2 oz. chicken thigh meat with skin on or off
- 3 Tbs. sake
- 2 Tbs. mirin
- 3 Tbs. raw cane sugar, or honey
- 3 Tbs. soy sauce

Spread the chicken meat out flat, and poke all over with the point of a knife or a fork, to allow the marinade to penetrate and to minimize shrinkage. Cut into bite sized pieces (for 90 g thighs that's about 4 pieces per thigh.)

Mix together the other ingredients in a non-reactive container (glass is good). Put in the chicken and mix. Leave for a

minimum of 10 minutes, or overnight.

To cook, heat up a non-stick frying pan. If you skinned the thighs, put in about 2 Tbs. of oil; if you're cooking them with the skin, no added oil is needed.

Drain the chicken pieces out of the marinade and put them into the hot pan, skin side down. As the pan starts to sputter, put a lid on and lower the heat to medium. Leave for about 4 minutes.

Take the lid off, and spoon a little bit of the leftover marinade over the chicken. Turn over (no need to put the lid back) and cook for another 2-3 minutes, depending on how thick the pieces are. They are done when you stick a knife into the middle of a piece and the juice that runs out is clear. The chicken should be nicely caramelized on the outside when you're done.

Take them out of the pan and let any excess oil drain off. At this point you can remove the skins if you left them on before and prefer no skin.

Let cool before packing into your bento box, or freezing.

You can defrost the chicken in a microwave, or in a dry pan with a lid on over low heat.

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