



JAPANESE-STYLE CHICKEN MEATBALLS



50 MINUTES

4 SERVINGS

Japanese chicken meatballs, called tsukune, are a standard offering in izakayas (pub-like gathering places) and restaurants specializing in yakitori. Sometimes shaped into cigars rather than orbs, the meatballs are grilled on skewers and finished with tare (pronounced tah-reh), a savory-sweet soy-based seasoning sauce. Vigorously mixing the meat mixture with either your hands or a silicone spatula helps

create structure and a characteristic “bounciness,” so don’t feel the need to be gentle when combining, as if making meatloaf or burger. Instead of skewering and grilling the tsukune, we shape the mixture into small, thick meatballs, skip the skewers, and do all cooking in a nonstick skillet on the stovetop. To add a little spice to the tsukune, offer shichimi togarashi (Japanese seven spice blend) or yuzu kosho (Japanese chili and citrus paste) at the table.

Don’t brown the meatballs aggressively or they’ll toughen up and will cook unevenly from edge to center. Heat the oil for browning them over medium-high, then reduce the burner to medium as soon as the meatballs are in the pan.

INGREDIENTS	
½	CUP SAKE
½	CUP  MIRIN
¼	CUP  SOY SAUCE
2	MEDIUM GARLIC CLOVES, 1 SMASHED AND PEELED, 1 FINELY GRATED
2	INCH PIECE FRESH GINGER, 2 TEASPOONS FINELY GRATED, THE REMAINDER THINLY SLICED AND BRUISED
1	POUND GROUND CHICKEN
4	SCALLIONS, MINCED, DIVIDED
⅓	CUP PANKO BREADCRUMBS
1	LARGE EGG WHITE
1	TABLESPOON TOASTED SESAME OIL
	GROUND BLACK OR WHITE PEPPER
2	TABLESPOONS GRAPESEED OR OTHER NEUTRAL OIL, PLUS MORE FOR OILING YOUR HANDS

DIRECTIONS	
01	Line a rimmed baking sheet with kitchen parchment and mist with cooking spray; set aside. In a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high, combine the sake, mirin, soy sauce, smashed garlic and bruised ginger. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring often, until reduced to ⅓ cup, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove and discard the garlic and ginger; transfer the mixture to a small bowl. Rinse out and dry the skillet.
02	In a large bowl, combine the chicken, the grated garlic, the grated ginger, ¼ cup scallions, the panko, egg white, sesame oil and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Using your hands or a silicone spatula, vigorously stir and knead the mixture until well combined and sticky. Using lightly oiled hands, divide the mixture into 16 portions (about 2 tablespoons each), form each into a ball and place on the prepared baking sheet. Lightly press each ball to slightly flatten it into a 1- to 1¼-inch round.
03	In the same skillet over medium-high, heat the neutral oil until shimmering. Place the meatballs in the skillet, reduce to medium and cook until lightly browned on the bottoms, about 4 minutes. Flip each meatball and add the sake-soy mixture; continue to cook, occasionally turning the meatballs and basting them with the sauce, until the centers reach 160°F and the exteriors are glazed, 5 to 7 minutes; reduce the heat to medium if the soy mixture is reducing too quickly.
04	If desired, transfer the meatballs and glaze to a serving dish. Sprinkle with the remaining scallions.

