

Chicken Satay (Satay Ayam)

INDONESIA

Indonesian satays probably started out in Java and then spread to all the other islands. Small pieces of meat are marinated, threaded on to small, bamboo skewers and then grilled over charcoal on narrow braziers. They are often served with a peanut-based dipping sauce. The ingredients for the marinade are mostly East Asian, with just the presence of ground coriander to remind us of the satay's origins.

I cut my chicken into slightly larger pieces than those on Indonesian market stalls and thread them on to flat, metal skewers. I also generally broil them indoors, though in the summer ~~it~~ is great fun to light up the charcoal and do the grilling outdoors. Just make sure that the charcoals are ashen before you set the skewers on the barbecue.

SERVES 4

4 teaspoons light Chinese soy sauce
1 tablespoon lime or lemon juice
1 clove garlic, crushed to a pulp
2 teaspoons peeled and finely grated fresh
ginger
1 tablespoon grated onion
1 teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 pound boneless and skinless chicken
thighs, cut into ¾-inch pieces
A little oil for brushing on the chicken while
cooking
Spicy Peanut Sauce (page 299)

Combine the soy sauce, lime juice, garlic, ginger, onion, coriander, sugar, and cayenne pepper in a bowl. Mix well. Add the chicken pieces and mix again. Cover and refrigerate for 3 to 24 hours.

Preheat the broiler. Set a shelf so that, when they cook, the kebabs will be about 4 inches from the source of the heat. Thread the kebabs on to skewers. I like long, flat skewers that can be rested on the edges of a shallow baking tray. The tray catches the drips and the kebabs themselves remain suspended above it. Brush the kebabs generously with oil and broil for 3 to 4 minutes on the first side and then another 3 to 4 minutes on the opposite side. Take the chicken off the skewers. Heat the Spicy Peanut Sauce and beat it lightly. Pour a few tablespoons over each serving and pass the rest on the side.