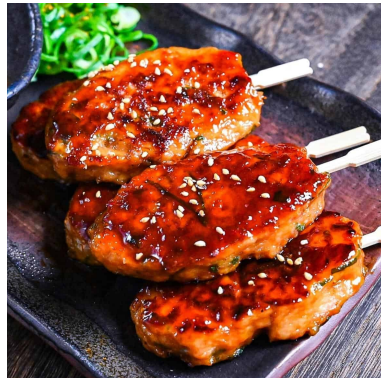


Pinecone Patties
(Soy-Glazed Minced Chicken)

鶏の松笠煮



Addictively delicious, these chicken patties are seasoned with *miso*, ginger, scallions and/or grated garlic to eliminate any possible gaminess. The meat mixture is shaped into oval patties and lightly scored to mimic the appearance of pinecones. Pinecones are an auspicious symbol in Japan. Since pine is associated with yearend-new year holidays, these patties are often included in *jūbako* (stacked boxes) used to display and serve New Year *osechi* foods. Short bamboo skewers are sometimes inserted in the patties after they are cooked to make them easier to serve and eat.

Soy-Glazed Minced Chicken Patties

Make 4 to 6 patties

12 oz ground chicken, dark meat preferred
1 teaspoon Sendai *miso* (or other full-bodied red *miso*)
1 teaspoon minced young ginger OR freshly grated (mature) ginger
2 scallions and/or 1 small clove of garlic, finely minced
1 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 tablespoon Canola oil (or other unflavored vegetable oil)
glaze:
1 tablespoon sugar
2 tablespoons *saké*
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons *dashi* (basic sea stock)

In a bowl, mix the ground meat with *miso*, grated ginger, minced scallion and/or garlic. Sprinkle the cornstarch over the mixture, then fold to work in. The mixture will be soft and a bit sticky. Lift the mixture and throw it back into the bowl with force. Repeat this pitching action 5 or 6 times (a bit like baseball practice) until the mixture is a smooth, cohesive mass. Divide into 4 to 6 portions.

Coax each portion of meat into a slightly flattened oval. With a butter knife, lightly score the surface of each patty in crosshatch fashion. Transfer the patties to a tray lined with cooking parchment.

Pour the oil into the skillet and heat until the oil shimmers (but does not smoke). Place the patties in the skillet, careful not to crowd the pan. Sear over medium heat for 1 and 1/2 minutes or until the meat begins to turn white/opaque around the edges. Carefully flip the patties and sear the other side for 1 minute.

Lower the heat slightly and pour in the glaze, swirling and jiggling to be sure the sauce coats the meat patties evenly. Flip the patties again (so that the scored side is facing up) and continue to cook for another 45 seconds. Swirl the skillet as the sauce reduces.

Remove the patties to individual plates. Place the skillet back on the stove and further reduce the sauce. Spoon reduced sauce over the plated patties. Serve hot or at room temperature.