

Sake-Simmered Chicken Mushrooms Recipe

Ingredients:

8 dried shiitake mushrooms*
1 teaspoon sesame oil
4 small skinless chicken breast fillets
1 carrot
400 g baby spinach leaves
Steamed rice, to serve
100 g enoki mushrooms* (optional), ends trimmed

Broth:

200 ml sake*
200 ml mirin*
300 ml chicken stock (or use the strained shiitake-soaking water)
1/4 cup light soy sauce
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon castor sugar

Method:

Soak shiitake mushrooms in a bowl of hot water for 20 minutes. Rub oil and a little salt into chicken and set aside. Cut the carrot into fine matchsticks. Drain shiitake mushrooms (reserving the water for stock if using) and slice, discarding stalks.

For the broth, place a deep frying pan over high heat. Add the sake and mirin and cook until bubbling. Remove from heat and carefully ignite liquid with a long kitchen lighter. When flames die, return pan to medium heat. Stir in the stock, light and dark soy sauce and sugar. Simmer for 5 minutes or until sugar dissolves. Place the chicken and sliced shiitake mushrooms in broth and simmer over medium-low heat for 15 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through, turning the chicken once. Add the carrot for the final minute of cooking.

Meanwhile, rinse the spinach, drained, then wilt in a large hot, dry frying pan over high heat, tossing well. Remove broth pan from heat. Remove chicken and slice. Divide rice, chicken and spinach among shallow bowls. Spoon over shiitake mushrooms, carrot and broth. Dip enoki mushrooms (if using) in remaining broth for a few seconds, then place on chicken. Serve hot.

* **shiitake mushrooms** - available fresh or dried, have a strong, distinct flavor

enoki mushrooms - are thin white mushrooms with a mild flavor and crisp texture. Eat raw or add to hot dishes at the last minute.

sake - a rice-based alcohol, is Japan's national drink and also commonly used in Japanese cooking.

mirin - a light, sweet Japanese rice wine used for sauces and marinades.

(Above ingredients can be obtained from Asian and health food shops, selected supermarkets and greengrocers).