

# Teriyaki Papaya Kebabs

Catherine Brown, Plant-based Chef & Culinary Nutritionist [A Seat at My Table](#)



These are outstanding - hands down! If you love teriyaki glazed wild salmon and are looking for a plant-based alternative that doesn't require a science lab, THIS is it. You can stop searching. Is it an exact replica of salmon, no. Nor is it

intended to be. However, it *is* a whole food that mimics the color, soft texture and flavor of teriyaki wild salmon without being "fishy". Even cooler, is the outer "skin" that develops during the low temperature cooking process. The end result?

You be the judge!

This dish was inspired by Alissa Cohen's Star anise Papaya Steak recipe in her book [Raw Food for Everyone](#). In April, 2017 I had the pleasure of attending Alissa's Level 3 Raw Food Teacher Training where she demonstrated how to make her recipe. If you'd like to learn more about Alissa's training classes, check out her [website](#).

I changed Alissa's dish into an appetizer, adjusted the proportions, and used some additional seasonings in the dry rub and added to the marinade to more closely resemble Japanese teriyaki sauce. I also added a sesame-coated sticky rice ball and quick pickled raw cucumbers.

Let's gets crackin' now, shall we?

Total Time: ~8 hrs Prep Time: 20 minutes Dehydrating/Low Cooking Time: 6-8 hrs for papaya, 25 minutes for rice

For 12 serving (2 skewers, 3 pieces each), you will need:

**For the teriyaki papaya skewers:**

- 1 med/large papaya (ripe, but not over-ripe)
- 1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns (mixed or black peppercorns can be used too)
- 2 whole star anise
- 2 large cloves garlic, finely grated
- 1 heaping tsp fresh ginger, finely grated
- 1/3 cup Nama Shoyu (raw soy sauce) or tamari sauce\*
- 1/3 cup maple syrup, grade A preferably (see note below)
- 6 long wooden skewers cut in half, for a total of 12

**NOTE:** brown rice syrup or agave syrup would work here too. I prefer maple syrup because I can purchase from local producers and it's much less processed. Date paste may also work, but I have not yet experimented with this option to know if the ratio would be the same.

\* Not sure about the difference between tamari sauce and soy sauce? Check out this [blog post](#) by Stephanie Jeong.

### **The Process:**

1. In a small bowl, combine the garlic, ginger, tamari and maple syrup. Stir and set aside.
2. Using a spice grinder, pulverize the peppercorns and star anise together.
3. Using a sharp paring knife, peel the papaya, cut in half (lengthwise), scrape and discard the seeds.
4. If using your oven, line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set your oven to its lowest setting. Adjust the rack to the middle. Place each papaya half, cut side down on the parchment paper. If using a dehydrator, place the papaya cut side down on silpat-lined dehydrator tray.
5. Score each papaya half similar to the way I did it here. (Don't worry, there is no right or wrong way here.)
6. Sprinkle some of the ground spices onto each papaya on both sides. Gently rub the spices in.
7. Using a basting brush, apply the marinade to both sides of the papaya. Dust the scored side with a bit more of the dry spices.
8. Place the pan in the oven. Baste the scored sides with additional marinade every 30 minutes. The total baking time will depend on the lowest temperature of your oven. My oven temp stayed around 160 degrees F and the papaya were done in 4.5 hours. This time would be reduced in a convection oven. Using a medium/low setting or 115 degree F on a dehydrator, they should be done in 7-8 hours, but each model varies. I always maximize my oven and/or dehydrator

usage by filling each wrack with other things too. This is a good time to make granola. I'll be posting my recipe soon!

9. How do you know when they're done? They should be a little darker on the outside, no longer wet-looking but slightly tacky. The score marks will now resemble grill marks. The flavors will intensify through this low cooking, but the real brilliance of this process is the outer skin-like texture that forms. This "skin" gives a slight resistance to each bite that makes these irresistible!

10. While the papaya is in the oven, make the pickled cucumbers (see below).

11. About an hour before you think the papaya will be done, make the rice (see below).

12. Cut each papaya half into 1" slices and each slice into 1-1.5" cubes. Thread three cubes onto each skewer leaving about 1/4" gap between each one. Return to oven to stay warm.

### **For the rice balls:**

1 cup Japanese short grain (sticky) rice cooked according to your package directions. Keep this warm.

1-2 Tbsp black and white sesame seeds spread out on a saucer

Ume Plum Vinegar for dipping (optional)

While the rice is still warm, scoop up a couple of tablespoons and, using slightly wet hands, roll into a ball. Next, roll the ball into the sesame seeds. Place on a plate until all have been made.

### **For the pickled cucumbers:**

1 cucumber, washed, unpeeled, julienne cut (not sure how to do this? watch this [short video](#))

1/4 cup rice wine vinegar

1/4 Mirin

1/2 tsp red pepper flakes

In a small saucepan, bring the vinegar, Mirin and red pepper flakes just to a boil. Remove from heat. Allow to cool for 10 minutes then pour over the julienned cucumbers. Refrigerate until the papaya is done.

To assemble, arrange each plate with two skewers, a neat pile of pickles, one rice ball and a small dish of Ume Plum Vinegar or other dipping sauce. Ume plum vinegar is tart and salty. I like the contrast with the bland rice and sweetness of the papaya.

Nutrition Facts	
Servings: 12	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>132</b>
	% Daily Value*
<b>Total Fat</b> 1g	1%
Saturated Fat 0.2g	1%
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 560mg	24%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 29.9g	11%
Dietary Fiber 1.7g	6%
Total Sugars 9.6g	
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 42mg	3%
Iron 2mg	11%
Potassium 142mg	3%
<small>*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a food serving contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calorie a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small>	
Recipe analyzed by <b>verywell</b>	

**Future experiments:** I like this version a lot. However, next time I have papaya on hand, I plan to add some white miso to the marinade and some finely cut nori to the rice. I'll let ya know how it goes!

The nutritional information is for two skewers, one rice ball and 1/4 cup of pickled cucumbers.

When you make this, let me know how it turned out. Be sure to take a photo and tag me [#chefcatherinebrown](#).