

Nectarine and Apricot Skewers

Alternating nectarine and apricot halves on skewers adds visual interest to this exotic Moroccan combination. Choose fruits that are similar in size and shape. Secure the fruit halves with two skewers to prevent them from rotating. For a refreshing summer dessert, serve the grilled fruit with homemade vanilla ice cream and a drizzle of honey.

Soak 12 bamboo skewers in water for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the nectarines and apricots in half lengthwise and remove and discard the pits. Line up the halves on a work surface, alternating between nectarines and apricots. Insert a skewer crosswise through the halves about ½ inch from one end. Insert a second skewer crosswise about ½ inch from the other end.

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a grill. Brush and oil the grill grate.

Brush the fruit on all sides with oil. Grill the skewers directly over medium heat, turning once, until the fruits are nicely grill-marked and slightly soft, 2 to 3 minutes per side.

Transfer the skewers to a platter and serve warm. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *On the Grill*, by Willie Cooper (Oxmoor House, 2009).

Moorish Pork Kabobs (*Pinchos Morunos*)

Pincho, or pinchito, *the diminutive, translates as “little thorn” or “little pointed stick,”* so pincho moruno *roughly means Moorish mouthfuls impaled on a thorn or skewer. Of course, the Moors were Muslims and did not eat pork, so Christian Spain took the Arab seasonings traditionally used on lamb kabobs (qodban) and applied them to their beloved meat.*

In a small fry pan over low heat, combine the olive oil, cumin, coriander, paprika, cayenne pepper, turmeric, oregano, the 1 tsp. salt and the black pepper. Heat until warmed through and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool to room temperature.

Place the pork pieces in a bowl and rub with the spice mixture. Add the garlic, parsley and lemon juice and toss well. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat a cast-iron grill pan over medium-high heat, or prepare a hot fire in a grill.

Thread the meat onto skewers and season with salt. Place the skewers on the grill pan or the grill rack and grill, turning once, until just cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter and serve with lemon wedges. Serves 8.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Savoring Series, *Savoring Spain & Portugal*, by Joyce Goldstein (Time-Life Books, 2000).

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Ingredients for Nectarine and Apricot Skewers

3 firm, ripe nectarines

4 firm, ripe apricots

Grapeseed oil for brushing

Tips for Making Kabobs

- In place of skewers, you can use herb branches, which lend their fragrance to the food as it cooks. Rosemary branches, for example, are excellent with lamb kabobs.
- When threading food onto skewers, be sure to leave a little space between the pieces to allow for browning. If packed together too tightly, the pieces will steam and cook unevenly.
- If preparing kabobs that combine meat and vegetables, you can either thread them onto the same skewer or slip them onto separate skewers. The former method creates a wonderful exchange of flavors and textures, while the latter allows for different cooking times and ensures the meat browns well.

Ingredients for Moorish Pork Kabobs (*Pinchos Morunos*)

½ cup olive oil

3 Tbs. ground cumin

2 Tbs. ground coriander

1 Tbs. sweet paprika

1½ tsp. cayenne pepper

1 tsp. ground turmeric

1 tsp. dried oregano

1 tsp. salt, plus more, to taste

½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

2 lb. pork shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes

2 Tbs. minced garlic

¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

Lemon wedges for garnish

Ingredients for Caprese Skewers

12 cherry tomatoes, halved lengthwise

12 fresh mozzarella balls, halved

12 large fresh basil leaves, torn in half

Olive oil for drizzling

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

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Technique Class: Sticks, Skewers & Satays

The meals-on-a-stick known as kabobs are a favorite for grilling, and they’re great for serving a crowd. Lamb is the traditional meat used to make kabobs, an age-old preparation that originated in the Middle East. But other types of meats as well as vegetables and even tofu can be used. Try cubes of beef seasoned with a spice rub and skewered with red and yellow bell peppers, or chunks of pork loin with pieces of pineapple and sweet onion. As an alternative to serving the food on the skewers, remove the grilled meat and vegetables and tuck them into warm pita bread, or place on a bed of rice or greens.

Skewers: Metal vs. Wooden

Whether to use metal or wooden skewers is a hotly debated topic. If you grill lots of kabobs, buy a set of flat-sided metal skewers that are at least 8 inches long. The metal conducts heat to help ensure even cooking. If using wooden skewers, soak them in water or, to enhance the flavor, in beer, wine or juice, for 30 minutes before skewering the food.

Preventing Bamboo (Wooden) Skewers from Burning

Soaking wooden skewers helps prevent them from burning. In addition, when placing skewers on the grill, angle the ends toward the edge of the grill or toward an area of lower heat. Or set them on a piece of aluminum foil placed on the grill rack to prevent the skewers from scorching or catching fire.

Caprese Skewers

If you cannot find bocconcini (small mozzarella balls) at your local market, you can use whole fresh mozzarella. Using a sharp chef’s knife, cut the mozzarella into ½-inch slices, then cut each slice into ½-inch cubes.

Thread 1 tomato half, 1 mozzarella ball half and 1 basil leaf half on a small wooden skewer or toothpick. Repeat to make the remaining skewers.

Arrange the skewers on a platter and drizzle with olive oil. Season generously with salt and pepper and serve. (The skewers may be covered and refrigerated for up to 2 hours; serve chilled or at room temperature.) Makes 24 skewers.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, *Small Plates*, by Brigit L. Binns (Oxmoor House, 2007).

Ingredients for Chicken Satay
1½ lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
½ cup coconut milk
¼ cup fish sauce
3 Tbs. firmly packed light brown sugar
2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
1 Tbs. Madras curry powder
1 Tbs. canola oil
Peanut sauce for serving

Ingredients for Chicken Satay
1½ lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
½ cup coconut milk
¼ cup fish sauce
3 Tbs. firmly packed light brown sugar
2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
1 Tbs. Madras curry powder
1 Tbs. canola oil
Peanut sauce for serving

Ingredients for Garden Skewers
2 zucchini, trimmed and cut into 1-inch chunks
12 fresh cremini or white button mushrooms, brushed clean
1 large red onion, cut into 1-inch chunks
1 red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks
Olive oil or oil spray, or an herb-flavored oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Chicken Satay

An Indonesian favorite, satay (pronounced sah-TAY) consists of small marinated cubes of meat, fish or poultry threaded onto skewers and grilled or broiled. Satay is usually served with a spicy peanut sauce. It’s a favorite snack food but can also be served as an appetizer or a main dish.

Cut the chicken into strips 4 inches long by ½ inch wide. In a large bowl, stir together the coconut milk, fish sauce, brown sugar, cilantro and curry powder. Add the chicken and stir until evenly coated. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a grill. Or preheat an indoor electric grill to medium-high heat according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Brush the grill grate or the grill with the oil.

Remove the chicken from the marinade; discard the marinade. Thread 2 or 3 pieces of chicken onto each skewer. Place the skewers on the grill and cook until the chicken is golden brown on both sides, about 10 minutes total. Transfer the skewers to a warmed platter. Pour the peanut sauce into a small bowl and serve alongside. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Asian*, by Farina Wong Kingsley (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

Garden Skewers

Almost anything you can grow can be grilled: corn, summer squashes, onions, tomatoes, green beans, bell peppers, eggplant, asparagus and even potatoes. Brushed with a little oil and grilled briefly over high heat, most garden vegetables are at their crunchy and flavorful best. Toss the vegetables with a little olive oil and your favorite grilling rub to create a delicious side dish.

Prepare a hot fire in a grill. Oil the grill rack.

Thread the zucchini onto skewers, alternating with the mushrooms, onion and bell pepper. Coat the vegetables with oil. Place the skewers on the grill and cook, turning once, until the vegetables are nicely grill-marked and tender-crisp, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Do not overcook; the vegetables should still be a little crunchy.

Transfer the skewers to a platter, sprinkle with a little more oil, and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately. Serves 4 to 6.

Serving Tips: These skewers are great accompaniments for grilled fish, seafood, steak or chicken. They can also serve as a vegetarian main dish, along with risotto or pasta.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Grilling*, by Denis Kelly (Simon & Schuster, 2002).

Lemongrass Shrimp Skewers

Serve these spicy shrimp skewers with peanut sauce, a favorite accompaniment to satay—seafood and meats that have been skewered and grilled. You can use our prepared peanut sauce or make one from scratch.

In a large bowl, stir together the coconut milk, fish sauce, brown sugar, ginger, cilantro and curry powder. Add the shrimp and stir to coat evenly with the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours.

Prepare a hot fire in a grill. Or preheat an indoor electric grill to high heat according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Spray the grill grate or the grill with nonstick cooking spray.

Trim the top and root end of the lemongrass stalks, then carefully cut each stalk lengthwise into 2 pieces. Remove the shrimp from the marinade; discard the marinade. Thread the shrimp onto the lemongrass stalks.

Place the skewers on the grill and cook until the shrimp are opaque throughout, about 2 minutes per side. Arrange the skewers on a warmed platter and serve immediately with peanut sauce for dipping. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Asian*, by Farina Wong Kingsley (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

Steak & Bell Pepper Kabobs

Grilling is easy when you have the right tools, including flat-edged metal skewers. Essential for kabobs, they keep food in place when you turn them.

In a large bowl, combine the wine, olive oil, grilling rub, salt and beef sirloin and stir to coat the meat evenly. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

Prepare a medium fire in a grill. Or preheat an indoor electric grill to medium heat according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Remove the beef from the marinade; discard the marinade. Thread the beef and bell peppers onto skewers, alternating the pieces and dividing them equally. Place the skewers on the grill and cook, turning the skewers occasionally, until dark grill marks appear underneath, about 10 minutes for medium-rare beef, or until done to your liking. Brush the meat and bell peppers with some of the grilling sauce and cook for 1 minute more, then brush with more sauce.

Transfer the skewers to a warmed platter or individual plates. Pass the remaining sauce alongside. Serves 6.

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Ingredients for Lemongrass Shrimp Skewers
½ cup coconut milk
¼ cup fish sauce
3 Tbs. firmly packed light brown sugar
1 tsp. grated fresh ginger
2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
1 Tbs. curry powder
1½ lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
4 lemongrass stalks
Peanut sauce for serving

Ingredients for Steak & Bell Pepper Kabobs
½ cup red wine
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 Tbs. beef grilling rub
½ tsp. salt
2 lb. boneless beef sirloin, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 orange bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 cup of your favorite grilling or barbecue sauce