

Sesame Chicken with Cashews, Dates & Vegetables

(2 servings)



- Boneless, skinless chicken (thighs or breasts) – **250 g**, cut into 2–3 cm chunks
- Toasted sesame oil – 2 T
- Fresh ginger – 1 tsp, minced
- Garlic – 3 cloves, thinly sliced
- Scallions – 2, cut into 3–4 cm pieces
- Chili flakes – $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp (adjust to taste)
- Mushrooms – 80 g (shimeji or maitake, separated)
- Bell pepper – $\frac{1}{2}$ red or yellow, cut into thin strips (≈ 70 g)
- Green vegetable – 80–100 g okra (sliced), zucchini (half-moons), or small broccoli florets
- Toasted cashews – 30 g
- Sake – 40–50 ml (or dry sherry)
- Low-sodium soy sauce or coconut aminos – 1 T
- Dates – 3, pitted and thinly sliced
- Fresh basil or pak chee – $\frac{1}{2}$ loosely packed cup (≈ 10 g)
- Rice vinegar or lime juice – 1 tsp, to taste
- Steamed rice – for serving

1. **Prep chicken:** Pat dry and season lightly with **black pepper**.
2. **Aromatics:** Heat **1 T sesame oil** in a wok over **medium-high**. Add **ginger, garlic, scallions, and chili flakes**. Stir-fry 1–2 min until fragrant.
3. **Chicken & nuts:** Add remaining **1 T sesame oil, chicken, and cashews**. **Stir-fry 3–4 min** until chicken is lightly browned.
4. **Vegetables:** Add **mushrooms, bell pepper**, and your **green veg** of choice. **Stir-fry 3–4 min** until just tender but still vibrant.
5. **Sauce:** Stir in **sake, soy sauce/coconut aminos**, and **dates**. **Simmer 2–3 min until** chicken is cooked through and sauce is glossy.
6. **Finish:** Toss in **basil or pak chee**, then drizzle with **rice vinegar or lime juice**.
7. **Serve:** Over steamed rice, ensuring each serving has chicken, vegetables, cashews, and sauce.

Nutrition (per serving, with zucchini + coconut aminos)

- **Calories:** ~ 310 kcal
- **Protein:** ~ 23 g
- **Fat:** ~ 15 g
 - Sat. Fat: ~ 2.5 g
- **Carbs:** ~ 18 g
 - Sugars: ~ 9 g
- **Fiber:** ~ 4 g
- **Sodium:** ~ 340 mg

Japanese Side Dish Options

Option 1: Japanese Cucumber Sunomono (きゅうりの酢の物)

Serves 2–3

- Japanese cucumber – 2 small (≈180 g), thinly sliced
- Rice vinegar – 2 Tbsp (30 ml)
- Sugar – 1 tsp (or substitute a touch of mirin)
- Kevala coconut aminos – 1 tsp (instead of soy sauce/salt)
- Toasted sesame seeds – 1 tsp

Method

1. Lightly salt cucumber slices, let sit 10 min, then gently squeeze excess liquid.
2. Whisk vinegar, sugar, and coconut aminos. Toss with cucumber.
3. Sprinkle sesame seeds before serving.

🌟 *Cool, tangy, cuts through the richness of sesame chicken while keeping sodium low.*

Option 2: Stir-Fried Shiitake & Komatsuna (or Spinach)

Serves 2–3

- Fresh shiitake mushrooms – 120 g, sliced
- Komatsuna (小松菜) or spinach – 150 g, chopped
- Garlic – 1 clove, thinly sliced
- Sesame oil – 1 tsp
- Kevala coconut aminos – 2 tsp
- White pepper – pinch

Method

1. Heat sesame oil in pan, add garlic and shiitake, stir-fry 2–3 min.
2. Add komatsuna/spinach, toss until wilted.
3. Finish with coconut aminos and a touch of white pepper.

🌟 *Earthy, savory, and adds umami balance to the sweet-savory chicken.*

Chinese Side Dish Options

Option 1: Chinese-Style Stir-Fried Bok Choy with Garlic

Serves 2–3

- Baby bok choy – 250 g, halved lengthwise
- Garlic – 2 cloves, thinly sliced
- Neutral oil – 1 tsp (canola or peanut oil)
- Kevala coconut aminos – 2 tsp (instead of soy sauce)
- Sesame oil – ½ tsp

Method

1. Heat oil in a wok/skillet over medium-high. Add garlic, stir-fry until fragrant.
2. Add bok choy, toss 2–3 min until stems are crisp-tender, leaves wilted.
3. Splash in coconut aminos, finish with sesame oil.

🌟 *Light, garlicky, and fresh — balances the sticky-sweet chicken glaze.*

Option 2: Chinese Braised Eggplant with Ginger & Scallions (红烧茄子風)

Serves 2–3

- Japanese eggplant – 2 medium (≈250 g), cut into 5 cm batons
- Ginger – 1 tsp, finely chopped
- Scallions – 2, cut into 4 cm lengths
- Neutral oil – 2 tsp
- Shaoxing wine (or sake) – 1 Tbsp
- Kevala coconut aminos – 2 tsp
- Rice vinegar – ½ tsp

- Chili flakes – pinch (optional)

Method

1. Heat oil in a wok, stir-fry eggplant until slightly softened.
2. Add ginger and scallions, cook until aromatic.
3. Splash with Shaoxing wine, coconut aminos, vinegar. Stir-fry 2–3 min until eggplant is tender and glossy.

🌟 *Soft, savory, slightly tangy — echoes Chinese banquet flavors, adds depth without excess sodium.*