Jerk Chicken

Make-ahead · Spicy · Serves 4

Ken's note: TBD

This is a grilled recipe. Live fire and pimento wood are the gold standard; a charcoal grill with hardwood chips is next best. An oven will work, but save this for a day you can cook outside.

Ingredients

Brine

- 8 cups water
- ¼ cup kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp whole allspice (optional)
- 3½–4 lb bone-in, skin-on chicken legs and thighs, or a cut-up chicken

Marinade

- 8 scallions, chopped
- 2–4 scotch bonnet peppers, stemmed (use fewer, or swap in habaneros, if you want less heat)
- 6 garlic cloves
- A 2-inch piece of ginger, sliced
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1½ Tbsp ground allspice
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp lime juice or apple cider vinegar
- 3 Tbsp oil
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar

Jerk barbecue sauce

- About ½ cup of the marinade, above
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- A squeeze of lime

Method

1. Stir the salt (and allspice, if using) into the water until dissolved. Brine the chicken in the fridge 4–8 hours, then drain and pat dry.
2. Blend the marinade until fairly smooth. Toss with the chicken and refrigerate at least 4 hours, or overnight. Set aside ½ cup of the marinade before it touches the raw chicken, for the sauce; or blend a half-batch separately.
3. Simmer the reserved marinade with the vinegar, ketchup, and brown sugar 8–10 minutes, until slightly thickened. Finish with lime. Taste; it should be sharp and spicy, not candy-sweet.
4. Grill over medium charcoal, turning and moving as needed, until the skin is well charred and the thickest part is 175°F or so, about 35–45 minutes. Brush with some of the sauce in the last few minutes. Rest 10 minutes, and serve with the rest of the sauce.