

Grilled Tandoori Chicken

Authentic Grilled Tandoori Chicken marinated in aromatic spices and yogurt. Learn to make this flavorful Indian classic at home with step-by-step instructions.

15 min

PREP

40 min

COOK

55 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Grilled Tandoori Chicken

Ingredients

- 3 lb chicken thigh
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 4 clove garlic
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup strained yogurt
- 2 tbsp fresh root ginger
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp cilantro (coriander)
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the marinade**

Combine 1 cup plain yogurt, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, 4 minced garlic cloves, 2 tablespoons grated ginger, 1 teaspoon each of cumin, coriander, turmeric, paprika, and salt, plus 1 tablespoon garam masala in a large bowl. Whisk until smooth and well combined.
- 2** Cut deep diagonal slashes about 1/2 inch deep into the thickest parts of the 3 pounds chicken pieces to help the marinade penetrate. Pat chicken dry with paper towels.
- 3** Add chicken pieces to the marinade and massage thoroughly to coat all surfaces, working marinade into the slashes. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 8 hours.
- 4 Prepare the grill**

Preheat grill to medium-high heat (about 400°F/200°C). Clean grill grates and brush with oil to prevent sticking.
- 5** Remove chicken from refrigerator 30 minutes before grilling to bring to room temperature. Remove excess marinade but leave a light coating on the chicken.

6 Grill the chicken

Place chicken on the grill and cook for 6-8 minutes per side, turning once, until grill marks form and chicken is lightly charred.

7 Reduce heat to medium-low (about 300°F/150°C) or move chicken to cooler part of grill. Continue cooking for 15-20 minutes, turning occasionally, until internal temperature reaches 165°F/74°C when tested with a meat thermometer.

8 Remove chicken from grill and tent with foil. Let rest for 5 minutes to allow juices to redistribute before serving.

Tips

Pat chicken completely dry before marinating to ensure the spices adhere properly and prevent excess moisture that can cause steaming instead of grilling.

Make deep diagonal cuts (about 1/2 inch deep) in the thickest parts of the chicken pieces to allow the marinade to penetrate and ensure even cooking throughout.

Toast whole spices like cumin and coriander seeds before grinding them for the marinade - this extra step intensifies their flavor significantly.

Don't skip the oil when cooking the spice paste initially - this blooming process awakens the spices and creates a more complex, aromatic marinade base.

Use full-fat Greek yogurt for the best texture and flavor - low-fat versions may cause the marinade to become watery and less effective at tenderizing.

Let the marinated chicken come to room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking to ensure more even heat distribution and better cooking results.

Keep a spray bottle of water nearby while grilling to quickly douse any flare-ups that might char the chicken too aggressively before it's fully cooked.

Allow the cooked chicken to rest for 5-10 minutes before serving - this helps redistribute the juices and prevents them from running out when cut.