

Pineapple-Marinated Chicken Breasts

By Eric Kim (New York Times)

Servings: 12

Estimated prep time: 1 hour

Bromelain, the group of enzymes in fresh pineapple, is excellent at breaking down the connective tissues in thick, fibrous chicken breasts. In this simple marinade, grated pineapple completely alters the texture of the breast meat, resulting in something akin to luscious dark meat. Briefly marinating here is important: leave it too long and the chicken will fall apart during the cooking, becoming shreddy and a little gluey. Fifteen minutes is the sweet spot. The accompanying pineapple salsa (recipe integrated with chicken recipe below) is a bright topping for the juicy morsels of aromatic chicken and rice. (Note that you can buy pineapple peeled and cored in most supermarkets).

Ingredients

2/3's packed cup of dark brown sugar
6 tablespoons rice vinegar
3 tablespoons of soy sauce
3 tablespoons of fish sauce
6 tablespoons of olive oil (plus more for cooking)
3 teaspoons of kosher salt
3 teaspoons of garlic powder
¾'s to 1 ½ teaspoons of ground cayenne
1 and ½ teaspoons black pepper
3 cups of diced fresh pineapple (*1/2-inch chunks*)
¾'s cup of finely diced red onion
6 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
6 tablespoons of finely grated fresh pineapple (including juice). Use a box grater or microplaner)
4 ½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts (*cut into 1 ½-inch chunks*)

Preparation

Step 1 – Marinade

In a bowl large enough to hold the chunks of boneless chicken breast, stir together the brown sugar, rice vinegar, soy sauce, fish sauce, 6 tablespoons of olive oil, salt, garlic powder, ground cayenne and black pepper. **Transfer 3 tablespoons of this mixture to another bowl in which the pineapple salsa will be mixed.** Now add the grated pineapple and its juices to the marinade.

Step 2 – Salsa

Add the diced pineapple, red onion and chopped cilantro to the bowl containing 3 tablespoons of marinade. Toss until well mixed and set bowl aside.

Step 3 – Marinate and cook the chicken

Marinate the chicken at room temperature for 15 minutes (and no longer). Once the chicken has been marinated, heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-high and add enough olive oil to lightly coat the bottom of the pan. Add the chicken pieces, leaving behind any marinade, in a single layer so that the pieces do not touch and let cook until the bottoms are brown—2 or 3 minutes. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until browned on all sides and no longer pink on the inside—4 or 5 minutes more.

Step 4 – Serving

Serve over white rice and top with reserved pineapple salsa. Note: Mary Menino will provide rice for Bristol Lodge meal.