

SERVES 4

Chinese Five-Spice Chicken

五香鸡腿



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PREP: COOK:
15 MINS* 30 MINS

*plus marinating

Another one of my top budget- and student-friendly dishes from university days. This five-spice chicken is super simple and packs in a ton of flavour. In fact, I'm pretty sure I made anyone I ever shared a kitchen with drool whenever I cooked this as it smells incredible. I give the credit to the five-spice with its fragrant combination of star anise, cloves, fennel, Chinese cinnamon (cassia) and Sichuan pepper. On top of that, the sweetness of the hoisin sauce and honey complements the savouriness of the soy sauce, and pairs particularly well with chicken.

For the best results, I get organized and marinate the chicken overnight - it's so worth it as the end result promises juicy, tender, umami-rich chicken with an irresistible glossy skin.

- 1kg (2½lb) skin-on boneless chicken thighs
- Steamed Rice (see p.21), to serve

FOR THE MARINADE

- 1 tbsp hoisin sauce
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp runny honey or brown sugar
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp Chinese five-spice powder
- 1 tsp dried chilli flakes (crushed red pepper flakes)

FOR THE SOY AND HONEY GLAZE

- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp runny honey or maple syrup
- 1 tsp dark soy sauce

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

- Pickled Cucumber (see p.27) or Smacked Cucumber (see p.40)
- Chinese Tea Eggs (see p.32)

Mix all the ingredients for the marinade together in a shallow dish. Add the chicken thighs and turn until coated all over. Cover and leave to marinate for at least 2 hours or preferably overnight - the longer the better for maximum flavour.

When you're ready to cook, preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/400°F/Gas 6 and line a roasting tray with aluminium foil to catch the juices while the chicken roasts. Remove the chicken from the marinade and place on a wire rack set over the lined tray. Pour over any remaining marinade juices.

Place the chicken in the oven and cook for 10-12 minutes, depending on the size of the thighs.

Mix all the ingredients for the soy and honey glaze together. Remove the chicken from the oven and brush the glaze all over, then return to the oven for another 5-7 minutes, until cooked through and golden. (If using bone-in chicken thighs, cook them for 25-30 minutes in total.)

To help crisp up the skin, turn the oven to the grill (broiler) function and cook for a final 5 minutes. The chicken should be sizzling, golden and glossy in appearance when ready.

Allow the chicken to rest for a few minutes for ultimate juiciness before serving. Slice and serve with steamed rice, pickled or smacked cucumber and halved Chinese tea eggs.