

## New World's Jerk Chicken

During my career as a chef, Jerk Chicken has become my happy meal for grown-ups. Customers come back time after time for my jerk chicken. It is succulent, savory and some say addictive. You can't stop eating it. My kids love it too!

Jerk is a native Jamaican concoction. It has been used for hundreds of years as a seasoning, tenderizer and preservative. A good Jerk is like a sophisticated Teriyaki. If you examine it that way, it becomes one of the best all purpose items in your fridge.

Use the dense "mud" from the settled ingredients for some good deep heat and a real island jerk flavor. Skim some of the liquid from the top and mix with a touch of pineapple juice for a mild but full flavored shrimp or snapper marinade. Add some to prepared mayo and watch that turkey sandwich dance!

Serves 4    Richter scale- 6-7, but variable according to your taste

1 4 lb free range chicken, quartered

3/4 cup minced white onions

4 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves

3/4 cup soy sauce

1 tablespoon pureed scotch bonnet peppers or real tropical pepper sauce

(for a milder family version, use just a bit of the flesh from the bottom of the pepper for flavor without the intense heat. )

4 tablespoons ground allspice

1 teaspoon nutmeg

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

1 cup chopped scallions

1 cup molasses

8 ounces pineapple juice

1/2 cup safflower or peanut oil

Coarsely grind the onions, hot pepper, scallion, herbs and spices in a food processor. Use a rubber spatula to scrape it all out. Place the ground mix with the rest of the ingredients, except the oil and chicken, in a saucepan with 2 cups water. Bring to a boil and let the mixture simmer for 10 minutes, stirring well frequently. Let cool and add the oil.

For jerking the chicken score the skin in a few places. Rub the jerk "mud" well into the chicken. Cover with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator for 3 hours or overnight.

Preheat a grill or broiler. If the chicken has been refrigerated, let it return to room temperature before grilling.

Sear the chicken bone side down over the hottest part of the grill or under the broiler, bone side up close to the heat source, caramelizing it well. Turn and caramelize the skin side carefully. Wrap the meat or fish

loosely in foil, ladle a tablespoon of marinade onto each piece of chicken, and close the foil up loosely. Finish cooking slowly on a cooler part of the grill or, if broiling, turn the oven from broil to bake at 300 and finish slowly in the oven for 20–30 minutes or until cooked through.

Larger or bone-in pieces of chicken may require longer cooking time in the oven. Test the meat by making a small incision in a thick part near the bone; if the juices run clear, the meat is done. Jerked food is better when cooked through slowly.

Jerking pork chops, pork shoulder, lamb leg pieces or top sirloin steaks in the same way as chicken. Jerking is a great way to tenderize tougher cuts of meat. Don't waste jerk on filet mignon or rack of lamb.

For jerking a rich fish like Mahi Mahi or bluefish, cut a narrow pocket into the side of each filet. Skim some of the solids from the jerk marinade and tuck into the pocket. Cover the fish with half the remaining jerk. Marinate the fish for no longer than 60 minutes before cooking.