

Chilli & Mango Chicken Wings

chicken wings with a hot and sweet
glaze

serves 2 – 3

medium-hot (but hotter or milder if
you prefer)

Chicken wings were made for the barbecue. You can't get further back to the basics of cooking and eating than making chicken wings like this. You cook them outdoors over open charcoal then you eat the meat right off the bone with your fingers. As if that wasn't enough, you then need to lick the last remnants of the chicken juices and the hot sticky glaze off your fingers. Basic or what?

I wanted to create a version of “hot wings” but with south Asian flavourings. The sweetness of the mango chutney is offset by the sharpness of the lime juice and the chilli certainly gets up and grabs your attention. You can reduce the chilli powder if you like; the spices will still provide plenty of flavour. When I was trying out this recipe on my children I did tone down the heat as they're not quite such enthusiastic chile-heads as their dad!

Chicken wings come in all sorts of cuts and sizes. What I'm talking about is wings with 3 main parts that look like a Z if laid flat. Try to get hold of free range chicken wings if at all possible. The proportion of meat to bone will be higher (and the meat will be tastier) than for battery farmed birds.

Cornflour is not a typical south Asian ingredient but its job is to set the glaze the moment it hits the heat and so prevent the glaze from dripping off the chicken wings. Because you are not marinating the wings you need maximum flavour from the glaze so you need to keep as much glaze as possible stuck to the wings.

ingredients

6 meaty chicken wings

1 green cardamom pod

3 × 15ml spoons of the syrup from a jar of mango chutney

(or use a smooth mango chutney)

1½ × 5ml spoons lime juice

1 × 2.5ml spoon ground coriander seed

about $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a 2.5ml spoon of hot chilli powder for a medium-hot taste

3 – 4 passes of a whole nutmeg over a nutmeg grater

1 × 5ml spoon cornflour (cornstarch)

special equipment

mortar and pestle to grind the cardamom seeds

a hot barbecue grill where the charcoal has turned grey

a pastry brush to apply the glaze

method

1. Take the green cardamom pod and split it in half with a sharp knife. Now take out all the little black seeds, place them in a mortar and grind them to a powder with a pestle. Use about half to two-thirds of the ground cardamom seed.
2. Use a metal spoon to extract the syrup from a jar of mango chutney. Pour the syrup into the 15ml measuring spoon. Fish out any large chunks of mango flesh and return them to the jar. It doesn't matter if you get small pieces of mango in with the syrup. Carry on until the measuring spoon is full. Repeat so you get 3 × 15ml spoons of syrup in all. Alternatively, use a smooth mango chutney which has been puréed in the factory.
3. Add all the ingredients, except the chicken wings and cornflour, to a small bowl and whisk until thoroughly mixed. If you have any small pieces of mango mixed in with the syrup then mash them to a pulp with the back of a fork. If you're worried about the glaze being too hot go easy on the chilli powder at this stage and add a little more later if necessary.
4. Refrigerate the glaze for at least an hour for the flavours to develop and for the ground spices to absorb some moisture.

5. After an hour or so remove the glaze from the refrigerator and give it a taste. Add more chilli powder if you feel it is too mild. At this stage, the glaze would make an excellent dip for another occasion so keep that in mind if you're cooking something plain and want to spice it up a bit at the table.
6. Add the cornflour to the glaze. Whisk until the cornflour is fully incorporated and there are no lumps left.
7. Now it's time to start cooking.
8. Oil the barbecue's grill either with a heat resistant brush or as follows. Take a wad of kitchen paper, soak the underside with vegetable oil and rub the oiled paper over the grill. Use lots of paper to keep your hand away from the heat.
9. Place the chicken wings on the grill and cook, turning occasionally, at a medium height over hot charcoal.
10. Cook the wings until the skin has gone crisp and the meat is completely cooked. Make a cut in the meatiest part of one of the wings to make sure none of the meat is still pink. If it is, return the wings to the barbecue, raise the height of the grill and cook until done.
11. Now it's time for the glaze. You will need to be quick at this stage or else the lovely crisp skin on the wings will go soggy. So keep the glaze and your pastry brush handy.
12. Brush the side of the wings facing upwards with glaze and immediately turn the wings over. While the glaze is cooking brush glaze over what is now the side facing upwards. As soon as the glaze being cooked starts to get small charred patches turn over the wings once more. When that side starts to get small charred patches the wings are ready to serve.



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