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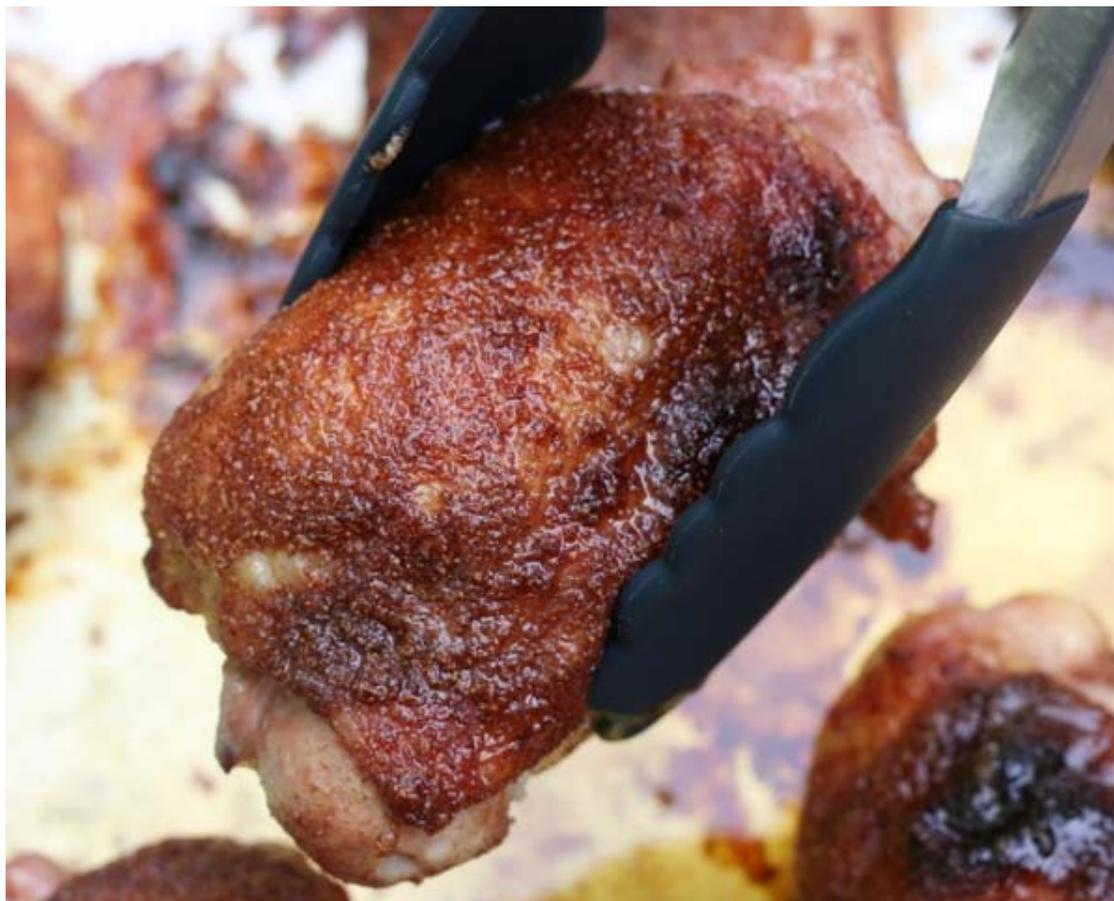
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## Grilled or Roasted Spice-Rubbed Chicken Thighs: My Go-To Easy Dinner

JULY 7, 2011



I am handing you the keys to the Queendom. Spice-rubbed chicken thighs is **the** dish for all those times this summer you're having friends over for a barbecue— and all the times year-round you need a meal you can get on the table with about 5 minutes of prep.



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This is the chicken dish that everyone loves. Perhaps it is a slight exaggeration to say "everyone loves it", because I am fairly certain vegans and vegetarians wouldn't, and maybe one or two chicken lovers. No, I take that last part back: I have never met a chicken eater who doesn't like these. That's actually saying a lot, considering the number of people for whom and with whom I have made this chicken, both at home and in my classes at ICE.

Wow, that sounded like a sell job. Really, if you don't want to try this particular recipe, that's your business and I don't want to be a recipe-pusher. But no matter what, this post should make it easy for you to roast and grill chicken thighs to perfection. Even if you don't use this knock-your-socks-off, killer-good spice rub...

Before I get to the actual recipe, here's my run-down on what you need to know to cook moist, tender and safe chicken thighs. (If after reading this you still have a question, write it in the comment form at the bottom of the post)

- **Thighs stay moist even when they're a little over-cooked.** This makes them stress-free to serve to company, because you can make them ahead and re-heat. Also, if you have a glass of wine while you're cooking and get involved in a conversation with a friend, and then realize oh-my-god-the-chicken! you might still be okay. The same cannot be said of chicken breasts, fish, steaks, or burgers. (Disclaimer: if the conversation goes on for, say, 30 minutes, you may need to make alternate plans for dinner).
- **Thighs come with their own built-in handle, making them ideal for walk-around gatherings.** The single bone that runs down the center sticks out a bit at either end, which makes thighs easy to pick up and eat without utensils.



- **Figure on two thighs per person**, or three thighs for big eaters. But they vary in size, so use your judgement.
- **The raw, on the bone weight is about double the cooked yield.** So buy 2 pounds of

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bone-in thighs to yield 1 pound of cooked meat.

- **Make them prettier.** Thighs come out of the package looking like a cartoon splat. Or a Rorschach test. You need to pretty them up by pulling the skin evenly over the meat and folding the sides under.

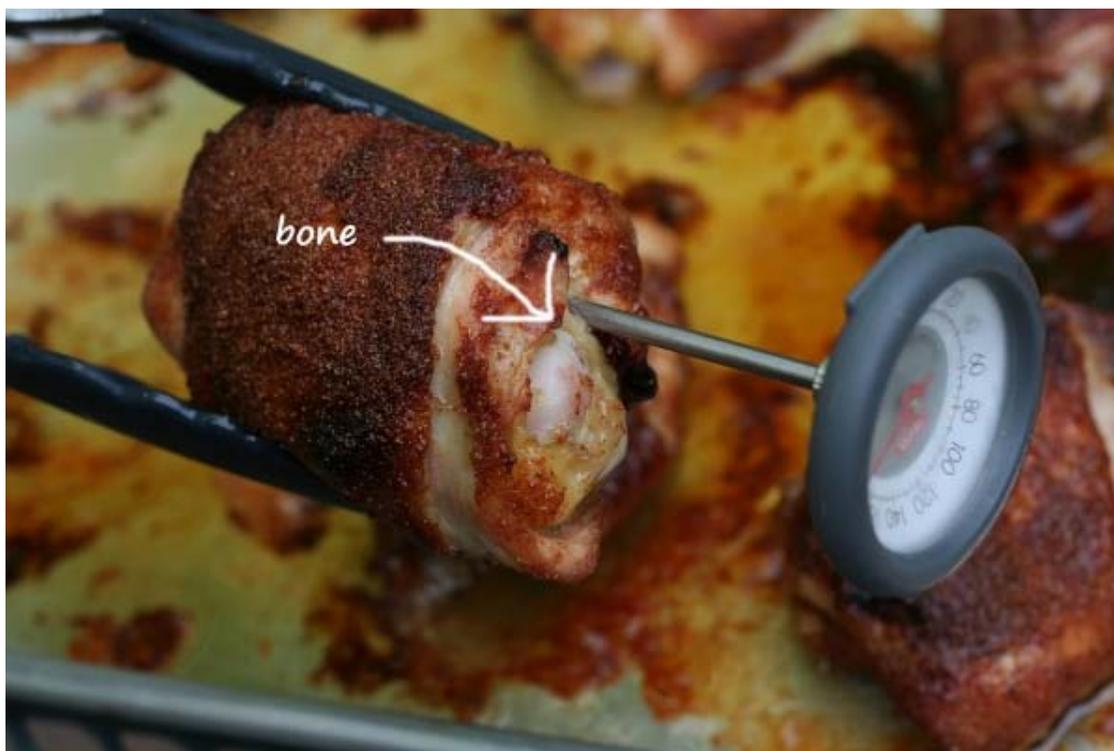


*messy splat-shaped thighs*



*neat prettied-up thighs*

- **You cut 40-50 calories and 1-2 grams of saturated fat per thigh by removing the skin.** Yup, but you also lose the golden, crisp skin. It's a choice. (I go both ways, depending on how dedicated I am to dieting at the time.)
- **Don't freak at the sight of pink.** Thighs can be cooked to a safe internal temperature and still be pink (or even have a red bloody-looking spot) near the bone. That has to do with blood vessels and protein structure, not "rawness". Use a thermometer and cook thighs to 170-175F. The thermometer should be parallel to but not touching the bone and the tip should be in the thickest part of the meat.



*Thermometer inserted parallel to the bone*

Okay, go cook.

### **Grilled or Roasted Spice-Rubbed Chicken Thighs**

2 tablespoons brown sugar

2 teaspoons ground cumin

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon cayenne

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

3 – 3.5 pounds chicken thighs (bone-in), about 12 thighs

1. If you are grilling, coat the grill rack with cooking spray and heat the grill for direct heat cooking. If you are roasting, preheat the oven to 425F and coat a large baking sheet pan with cooking spray.
2. Combine the sugar, cumin, salt, garlic powder, ginger, cinnamon, cayenne and black

- pepper in a bowl, working the mixture with your fingertips to get rid of any lumps.
3. Shape and trim the thighs. Pat the mixture over the entire surface of the thighs.
  4. **To roast:** place in the oven, skin side up, and cook until the largest thigh reaches an internal temperature of 170-175F, about 30-35 minutes depending on the size of the thighs. **To grill:** place on the grill skin side facing down and cook 15 minutes. Turn and cook until the largest thigh reaches an internal temperature of 170-175, about another 15 minutes.

Makes 6 servings

Nutritional analysis per serving:

With skin: 322 calories, 19 g fat, 5 g sat fat

W/o skin: 237 calories, 11 g fat, 3 g sat fat

{ 12 comments... read them below or [add one](#) }

**laurie** July 8, 2011 at 5:03 am



That recipe truly annoints the hostess as the queen. It sounds so easy. Have you thought about adding calorie contents to your recipes?

REPLY

**Marge** July 8, 2011 at 7:36 am



Great point, Laurie. I have added the nutritional analysis to the recipe– for both skin on and skin off. And in the future, I will include the nutrition whenever possible.

REPLY

**Amy Nieporent** July 8, 2011 at 5:29 am



Could this be done with other cuts of chicken? Like breasts cut in half?

REPLY

**Marge** July 8, 2011 at 7:35 am



You can certainly use this spice rub on other cuts of chicken, though of course your cooking times will vary. (Chicken breasts need to be cooked to only 160F, by the way, or they will get dry). The spice rub is also very good on swordfish, salmon and flank steak.

REPLY

**VIVIEN SIEGEL** July 8, 2011 at 6:38 am

SOME MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY DO NOT LIKE CUMIN, IS THERE ANOTHER SPICE YOU COULD SUGGEST AS A SUBSTITUTE?



REPLY

**Marge** July 8, 2011 at 7:33 am



To replace the cumin, I would stick with some of the sweet spices: perhaps a pinch of cardamom and/or about 1/2 teaspoon of ground coriander. Or, you can take it in a slightly different direction and use curry.

REPLY

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**Roisin** July 9, 2011 at 7:55 am



Roasted chicken thighs with cannellini beans & rosemary are our winter go-to, and we usually forgo the oven for the grill in summer. So we're doubly excited to try this recipe on the grill. Can't wait .... keep 'em coming.

REPLY

**Marge** July 11, 2011 at 7:17 am



Roisin, your winter dish sounds great– maybe when the weather gets cool, you'll share...

REPLY

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**Andrea @ From the Bookshelf** July 9, 2011 at 11:27 am



This looks amazing! I have some thighs just waiting for this recipe!

REPLY

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**Toni Scott** July 11, 2011 at 2:44 pm



Making these tonight! Funny, I never thought about "neatening up" my thighs. They look much better this way!

REPLY

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**sarah** July 11, 2011 at 3:44 pm



Made these last night with b/s thighs. They were great, and I am excited to try them again soon with the curry substitution.

Thank you!

REPLY

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**Magpies Recipes** July 11, 2011 at 4:46 pm



This looks delicious and really simple too! adding it to my collection of easy chicken dinner recipes 😊 thanks!

REPLY

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