

DRUNKEN CHICKEN

This is a fun recipe, tastes wonderful, makes the crowds happy, and best of all involves beer! Some people call this beer-can chicken, and they even make special racks for this dish. They're nice, but you really don't need one. Either way, the most common comment people make after having this is "this is the moistest and best chicken I've ever had!" That makes it worth a try doesn't it?

1 Whole Chicken, 3 ½ - 4 pounds
1 6 Pack Beer (pick something that you like: pilsner, amber, honey wheat...)
1/3 cup Dry Rub
2 teaspoons Vegetable Oil
2 cups Wood Chips (preferably hickory or cherry)

Decide what kind of rub you want to use. You can't go wrong with the recipe "dry rub for ribs", but there are also commercial dry rubs available, or you can be brave, say a prayer, and try your own! Try salt, pepper, garlic, thyme and rosemary...or perhaps just lemon pepper...or equal parts salt, pepper, paprika and brown sugar....or 2 parts Old Bay seasoning and 1 part brown sugar...try something that sounds good to you! The following recipe assumes the "dry rub for ribs" recipe is being used, if you make your own, you need to decide how strong it is and how much to use.

Begin by immediately drinking ½ can of beer. Using a church key style can opener, make 2 more openings in the top of the can, and set it aside to warm up. Add 1 Tablespoon of your rub mixture to the beer. It may foam up a bit but that's to be expected. Next, place the wood chips in a bowl, and cover with beer (1 can) to soak. You may find it useful to place a saucer on top of the chips as they float to help keep them submerged.

Remove the neck and giblets from the bird, rinse with cold water, inside and out, and blot dry with paper towels. Remember that anything the chicken or juices touch may have salmonella...so keep everything clean and wash your hands often. Sprinkle about 1 Tablespoon of the rub in the main cavity and 1 teaspoon in the neck cavity. Drizzle the oil on the outside of the bird and rub or brush it all over the skin. Sprinkle the remaining rub on the chicken and rub it all over.

Hold the bird upright with the opening of the cavity at the bottom, and lower it on to your beer can so the can fits into the cavity. Pull the chicken legs forward to form a sort of tripod so the bird stands upright. The rear leg of the tripod is the beer can. Tuck the wings behind the chickens back. It'll look like it has some attitude, like Mick Jagger on stage.

Prepare the grill for indirect grilling and preheat to medium (300 -350 degrees). If using charcoal, place a drip pan in the center. When you are ready to cook, place ½ of the wood chips on the coals. If using a gas grill, place ½ of the wood chips in your smoking pan (see smoked ribs). Stand the chicken up in the center of the grate, cover the grill, and cook until the skin is a dark golden brown, the skin is very crisp, and the meat is cooked through (about 180 degrees in the thickest part of the thigh), about 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours. During this time, you should be enjoying the rest of the six pack of

beer! After about 45 minutes, add the rest of the wood chips to your gas grill smoker. If using charcoal, you will need to add about 12 fresh coals per side after 45 minutes. After 1 hour, mix the coals slightly, then add the rest of the wood chips. If the chicken starts to brown too much, loosely tent the bird with foil.

When it is done, use 2 sets of tongs to remove it from the grill: 1 on the can, the other around the chicken. Transfer it to a platter and present it to the guests if you wish, but it is inherently unstable so be careful as you carry it around. Allow the chicken to cool for at least 5 minutes, then remove the beer can, being careful not to spill hot spiced beer on yourself. Halve, quarter, or carve the chicken as you desire and serve.