

Ginger-Garlic Chicken

by Mary Anne Mohanraj, featured in *A Feast of Serendib: Recipes from Sri Lanka*



This is my daughter's favorite chicken dish, and one she always greets with delight; she started eating it when she was about five, with no added chili powder. Over time, I've added a little more chili powder when feeding it to both kids, serving with milk to help them along; you can also use black pepper if you'd prefer.

The timing on this is variable because you can either do it the long way described below, the way my mother recommends, which is definitely a bit tastier—or you can do a much faster version, where you mix the spices with the chicken, skip the marinating, and then sauté the chicken in the pan on medium-high until cooked through, then serve. I use both methods, mostly depending on how much of a hurry I'm in. Regardless of which method you use, this dish is best served fresh; if it sits, the chicken will tend to get dry and not be as tasty.

Preparation time: 30-90 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 heaping teaspoon ginger powder
- 1 heaping teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 heaping teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 12 chicken thighs, about 2 pounds, deboned and cut bite-sized
- Vegetable oil for frying
- ½ to 2 heaping teaspoons red chili powder (to taste, optional)

Process

1. Mix ginger powder, garlic powder, turmeric, and salt in a large bowl; add chicken pieces and rub with your hands until well coated. Marinate for 30 minutes.
2. Heat oil on high; add chili powder (if using) and cook for 15 seconds, stirring.
3. Add chicken and sear on high, turning to brown on all sides.
4. Reduce heat to low and cover; cook for about 15-20 minutes, until meat is cooked through.
5. Uncover and cook until all the liquid is gone.
6. Tilt pan and push chicken pieces to one side; allow excess oil to drain to one side for 5 minutes. Remove chicken and serve hot.

Note: If reheating a day or two later, I recommend reheating in a pan with a little coconut milk; simmer 5-10 minutes, long enough for the milk to thicken with the spices into a nice sauce. Or serve dry with a nice coconut-milky vegetable curry, like carrot or beetroot curry.