

6. On the Grill

The pleasures of grilling are many, indeed.
First, there's the taste of the food-
that smoky intensity of flavor, the juiciness.
Then there's the ease and speed of grilling.
And the ritual - the communal fun of gathering
around a fire with family and friends,
anticipating the food and then eating.

But grilling needn't be seasonal. Though purists insist that the only grilling worth the name occurs outdoors over live coals, the gas grill, broiler, and grill pan also produce charred flavor. My own discovery of the grill pan occurred recently, and I now sing its praises. The trusty broiler can do magic as well, provided you've preheated it sufficiently and allow some circulation of air within it (by keeping its door slightly open) so your food doesn't bake.

Grilling can also be combined with other cooking methods. When grilling for a crowd, it's advantageous to prebake to make the cooking process more manageable and to avoid a dry result. The preliminary cooking also helps marinades penetrate food. With dishes such as Georgian Cinnamon Citrus Chicken or Be-All and End-All Barbecue Sauce Chicken, prebaking allows flavors to come through more immediately. Besides saving time, prebaking also curbs charring, which can mask delicate tastes.

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KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MARINATING

Most marinades contain an acid-wine, citrus juice, or vinegar. These acids tend to break down poultry protein, allowing seasonings to infuse the bird. Always refrigerate marinating poultry if it is to remain in its flavoring bath more than an hour. It may seem obvious, but it's a good idea to cover marinating poultry - you don't want to flavor the fridge or have the bird lose moisture.

Turn marinating food. You want all food surfaces to have a chance to absorb maximum flavor and to remain well coated (to maintain moisture). You can often put a bird and its marinade in heavy resealable bags; all you have to do is shake the bag now and then and the bird receives a perfectly even distribution of the marinade. The bags are also perfect for transporting marinating chicken to grilling destinations. Or marinate food in containers with tight-fitting lids. Just shake the containers, and your food is bathed in the marinade.

Generally speaking, drain marinating food well before grilling it. Foods that have marinated in an oil-containing bath can go right on the grill or under the boiler. Spice-rubbed or other dry-marinated poultry can't be grilled or broiled until the grill - or the bird - is lightly coated with oil to prevent sticking and ensure browning. (Some grill pans are nonstick; even so, they must be oiled lightly or sprayed with a vegetable spray before preheating.)

Cut up marinated birds - as opposed to breasts - should be turned often when grilling for even cooking. The white meat cooks more quickly than the dark and should be removed as soon as it's done. Boneless breasts are relatively thin and cook quickly. Always pay attention to birds that have marinated in a bath containing sugar, which can burn quickly.

Many of the marinades that follow can be prepared beforehand - a real time saver - and they're versatile. The marinade used with Grilled Chicken Paillard with Pepper-Leek Topping, for example, is great to have on hand for meat or fish. As you read the recipes in these pages, think of the marinades as independent of the dishes they're used in. That should increase your sense of their usefulness while sparking your cooking imagination.

GREAT GRILLING

The first consideration is the grill itself. If you're the owner of a gas grill, you have little to worry about when it comes to firing the grill - you just turn it on. Know, though, that a gas grill will never get as hot as its briquette burning alternative. You must therefore preheat your gas grill for 10 to 15 minutes. This preheating rule also holds for the broiler and for the grill pan. Oil, then preheat your grill pan until it sizzles, about 5 minutes.

Gas is convenient, but you get tastier results with live coals; they get hotter and sear better. To prepare a briquette burning grill, you must first choose the briquettes. For additional flavor, add hickory or mesquite chips to real charcoal briquettes.

Following the traditional method, I pile the briquettes in the grill in a layer that's about 6 inches thick: First, wad up old newspaper, place it in the center of the grill, and mound the charcoal around it. Avoid chemical fire starters of any kind; instead, soak a few coals with ordinary cooking oil and arrange them strategically in the mound. Light the paper, and the oily coals do the rest.

Another alternative is to use a pail or chimney starter - it's fussless. Fill the urn with newspaper and briquettes, ignite the newspaper, and when the briquettes have caught, dump them onto the grill bed. Put unlit briquettes on top and allow them to catch. Let all the coals burn until you've got glowing, ash-covered embers. Then, using a large barbecue spatula, redistribute the embers across the fire bed.

To test the heat of the fire, put your hand about 3 inches above it. If you can tolerate the heat for only 2 to 3 seconds, the fire is hot; 3 to 4 seconds means the fire is medium-hot to medium; 5 seconds, low.

Put the grate on the grill to let it get very hot; that ensures attractive grill marks and also aids in cooking. When you're ready to cook, adjust the grill to the height you need, and you're ready to go.

Make sure the food you're grilling is at room temperature before it's cooked and well drained to avoid flare-ups. Vegetables and other small pieces of food are best grilled on grilling racks or screens. These perforated metal cooking surfaces go right on top of the grill (those with handles are easier to use).

Remember - never grill over flaring coals; embers are hotter than flame. If your food begins to burn when you start to cook, remove it from the grill immediately, allow the fire to subside, and change the height of the grill, using asbestos gloves or other protection. If you're using a gas grill, simply change the temperature setting. It's usually best to cover the grill when cooking poultry; heat is concentrated and there's less smoke. Indoors, just remember to preheat the broiler. And sit down to delectable grilled poultry, any time of year.

Thai Peppered Chicken with Chili Sauce

For this delirious dish, chicken cutlets are marinated in a pungent bath containing garlic and ginger; grilled, and served with a hot Thai sauce. This marinade incorporates a soy mixture with herbs and spices that provides authentic flavor. Presented on a bed of fresh greens and served with Sushi Rice (page 211), the cutlets make a light but flavorful entree, great for a simple supper. You can marinate the cutlets up to two days in advance, which makes the final dish assembly a breeze.

4 large chicken cutlets (about
2 pounds total), lightly pounded

4 whole garlic cloves, plus 2 crushed
One 1-inch piece peeled fresh ginger

1 teaspoon cracked black peppercorns

1/4 Cup fresh coriander leaves (cilantro)

2 tablespoons chopped fresh lemongrass

2 tablespoons light soy sauce

1 tablespoon peanut or canola oil

1 small fresh red chili pepper, seeded if
less heat is desired, and finely chopped

2/3 cup white vinegar

Pinch of salt

1 tablespoon sugar

4 cups shredded greens, such as
romaine, Boston, or red leaf, singly
or in combination; mint and/or
basil leaves can be included

Serves 4

1. Place the chicken in a medium nonreactive bowl.

2. Turn on a food processor and with the machine running, drop the 4 garlic cloves and ginger through the feed tube. When chopped, stop the machine and add to the work bowl the peppercorns, coriander, lemongrass, soy sauce, and oil. Pulse until the coriander is chopped. Pour the mixture over the chicken and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours and up to 2 days.

3. In a small saucepan, combine the chili pepper, vinegar, salt, sugar, and the crushed garlic. Simmer for 3 minutes. Cool.

4. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler or a grill pan. If using a grill pan, spray it first with olive oil spray. Grill the chicken outdoors over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source until just cooked through and lightly browned, 6 to 7 minutes per side. Alternatively, broil or cook the chicken in a grill pan about 2 to 3 minutes per side.

5. Divide the greens among 4 plates. Fan each cutlet by slicing it diagonally 1 inch from the narrow end through the opposite side and spreading the meat slightly. Divide the cutlets among the plates. Serve with the chili sauce.

Grilled Coriander Citrus Chicken

Cooks use almost every part of the coriander plant. The musky tasting leaves - sometimes called cilantro or Chinese parsley - flavor a wide range of Latin and Asian dishes. The seeds, whose taste is subtly floral, are used whole, often in pickling, or ground. This savory dish uses the whole seeds, which should be crushed first with a mortar and pestle to release their fragrance.

The marinade for this chicken, which features the bright, tangy tastes of fresh grapefruit and lime juices, also works well with meaty fish. It can be made in advance and stored refrigerated for up to two weeks.

Serve the chicken with Corn and Pepper Relish and roasted potatoes.

MARINADE

1 1/2 cups fresh grapefruit juice
(from 2 grapefruits)

1/2 cup fresh lime juice

1/4 cup canola or other light vegetable oil

5 garlic cloves, crushed

1 bunch scallions, white and green parts
thinly sliced, green parts reserved
for garnish

Scant tablespoon crushed coriander seeds
1/2 cup soy sauce

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Two 3 1/2 pound chickens, all visible fat
removed and cut into eighths

Serves 6

1. To make the marinade, in a large nonreactive bowl, combine the grapefruit juice, lime juice, oil, garlic, scallion whites, coriander seeds, soy sauce, and pepper. Whisk to blend.

2. Place the chicken in the marinade and turn to coat. Marinate, refrigerated, 3 hours or overnight. Remove the chicken from the refrigerator 20 minutes before cooking.

3. Prepare the grill or preheat the broiler. Grill the chicken over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, turning as needed, until the juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a fork, 30 to 40 minutes, or broil, turning once, about 10 minutes per side. Allow to cool slightly, garnish with the reserved scallion greens, and serve.

Grilled Chicken Panzanella

My first encounter with panzanella, the rustic Italian bread and tomato salad, was in central Italy, at a small-town cafe. A couple was enjoying a big bowl of panzanella at the next table and the look of pleasure on their faces convinced my husband and me to order the salad. It was fresh and light, full of pure, simple flavors - magnificent.

This version captures the sparkle of that salad (be sure to make it when tomatoes are at their peak), and adds tangy grilled chicken strips. You can prepare and store the salad ingredients separately beforehand - you can even grill the chicken in advance. Then toss everything together just before serving.

This makes a perfect summer-fall Shabbat lunch.

CHICKEN

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons olive oil

4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Kosher salt

6 medium chicken cutlets (about 2 pounds total)

SALAD

8 cups crustless bread cubes (about 1 inch) from good, firm country-style bread

8 large, ripe tomatoes, cut into medium dice

1 small cucumber, peeled and finely diced

1 large red onion, peeled, cut into small dice

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 cup chopped Italian parsley

1. To prepare the chicken, in a medium nonreactive bowl, combine the lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, and pepper. Season to taste with the salt. Add the chicken, stir to coat, cover, and marinate, refrigerated, for 2 to 4 hours.

2. To make the salad, place the bread in a large bowl. Drizzle the bread with enough water to moisten but not soak it, 1/2 to 3/4 cup; toss and allow the bread to absorb the water fully, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, cucumber, onion, garlic, parsley, and rosemary. Mix in the olive oil, lemon juice, and vinegar and season to taste with the salt and pepper. Set aside.

3. Prepare a grill or preheat a grill pan. If using a grill pan, spray it first with olive oil spray. Grill the chicken outdoors over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source until just done, 6 to 7 minutes per side, or 2 to 3 minutes per side if using a grill pan. Fan each breast by slicing diagonally 1 inch from the narrow end through the opposite side and spreading the meat slightly.

2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary

2 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper

1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, 6 leaves left
whole, the rest cut into thin strips

Serves 6

4. Divide the salad among 6 plates. Place a fanned cutlet on each portion and season with the salt and pepper. Garnish with the basil leaves and strips and serve immediately.

Grilled Chicken Paillard with Pepper-Leek Topping

This dish of grilled chicken paillard - lightly pounded cutlets - on arugula with a red pepper and leek compote is simple but exciting. The tart-sweetness of the marinated chicken is perfectly balanced by the leeks; the fresh arugula adds bite and character.

I love the balsamic vinegar based marinade used for this dish. It also works well with firm-fleshed fish or vegetables you intend to grill. The topping is equally versatile - you can use it to make a wonderful omelet, frittata, or open-face turkey sandwich. This colorful dish is also great for a buffet.

TOPPING

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 red bell peppers, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 4 leeks, white and light green parts, washed and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup Chicken Stock, or good instant or low-sodium canned broth
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper

MARINADE

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 shallots, finely minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano leaves, or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary leaves, or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1/4 cup dry white wine

1. To make the topping, in a medium skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the peppers and leeks and saute until soft, about 4 minutes. Do not allow to color. Add the wine and stock. Cook until slightly reduced, about 3 minutes. Add the parsley and pepper. Set aside.

2. To make the marinade, in a medium nonreactive bowl, combine the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, shallots, oregano, rosemary, white wine, salt, and pepper and blend.

3. Add the chicken. Cover and refrigerate at least 4 hours and up to overnight.

4. When ready to cook, drain the chicken. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler or a grill pan. If using a grill pan, spray it first with olive oil spray. Grill the chicken outdoors over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source until just cooked through, 6 to 7 minutes per side. Alternatively, broil or cook the cutlets in a grill pan, 2 to 3 minutes per side.

Pinch of salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

6 large chicken cutlets
(about 3 pounds total), pounded to
1/4 inch thickness

3 bunches arugula, washed and dried,
leaves separated

3 large beefsteak tomatoes, cut into
medium dice

Serves 4 to 6

5. Arrange the arugula and tomatoes on plates. Top with the chicken, spoon over the pepper-leek compote, and serve.

Georgian Cinnamon Citrus Chicken

The Russian region of Georgia is famously fertile. Grapes and wheat have been cultivated in its eastern half for thousands of years; its western part is known for citrus and tea farming. The Georgians love robust, spicy food and are famous for their hospitality. This grilled chicken dish celebrates the Georgian passion for spice and two prized Georgian products, oranges and lemons.

The marinated chicken is baked before grilling to intensify flavor; cut down on time, and ensure even cooking. The baking can be done early in the day so the final preparation goes quickly (refrigerate the chicken if you're staggering its preparation, then grill it without bringing it to room temperature first). The tangy marinade is also great for chicken cutlets or steaks from firm-fleshed fish like tuna or halibut. If using the marinade for chicken cutlets or fish, the marinating time shouldn't exceed 2 hours.

2 cups fresh orange juice
(about 5 oranges)

1/2 cup fresh lemon juice (about 3 lemons)

1/2 cup dry white wine

3 cinnamon sticks

Grated zest of 1 orange

Grated zest of 1 lemon

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger

1 cup minced onion

1/2 teaspoon fenugreek (optional)

3 tablespoons paprika

1 teaspoon cracked black peppercorns

1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1 tablespoon blackstrap molasses

2 tablespoons olive oil

Two 3-pound chickens, all visible fat removed, cut into eighths and skin removed (optional)

Serves 6 to 8

1. In a small saucepan, combine the orange and lemon juices, wine, and cinnamon. Boil until 1/2 cup liquid remains. Cool.

2. Place the orange and lemon zests in a medium nonreactive bowl. Add the garlic, ginger, and onion. Stir in the juice mixture, fenugreek, if using, paprika, peppercorns, nutmeg, molasses, and oil. Place the chicken pieces in 2 nonreactive baking dishes. Brush the chicken on all sides with the marinade. Cover the pans with plastic wrap and marinate, refrigerated, at least 2 hours or up to overnight. Turn the pieces once. Thirty minutes before cooking, remove the chicken from the refrigerator.

3. Preheat the oven to 350°F and prepare a grill. Baste the chicken with the marinade and bake flesh side down 20 minutes. Remove the chicken and grill it over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, or broil, turning as needed, until the juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Serve.

Spiedini di Pollo

Spiedini are the kebabs of Italy and are prepared throughout the country. They are, however, most typical of Apulia, which is known for its spiedini of young lamb. These delicious spiedini contain chicken, red peppers, lemon, and tomato. What gives them their special liveliness is the contrast among the texture of the chicken, the softness of the tomato, and the tart-smoky flavor of grilled lemon. Serve these with grilled polenta for a feast.

2 pounds chicken cutlets, cut into
1 1/2 inch cubes

2 bell peppers, preferably yellow, cored,
seeded and cut into 2-inch cubes

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1 garlic clove, pressed

1 tablespoon fine, dry toasted
bread crumbs

1/2 teaspoon crushed fennel seeds

Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper

3 small, firm ripe tomatoes,
quartered and seeded

1 large lemon, cut into 1/4 inch slices

Four 12 inch wooden skewers,
soaked in water for 30 minutes to avoid
burning, or metal skewers

Serves 4

1. Put the chicken and peppers in a bowl. Add the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, bread crumbs, and fennel seeds. Season with the salt and pepper, mix well, and marinate at room temperature 20 to 30 minutes.

2. Prepare the spiedini two at a time, threading the ingredients on the skewers in this order: pepper, tomato, lemon, chicken, lemon, tomato, pepper, and so on. Try to end with a piece of pepper. If using wooden skewers, cover any bare wood with strips of foil to prevent coloring during cooking.

3. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Brush the spiedini with the marinade. Grill over medium heat, about 4 inches from the heat source, or broil, 5 to 6 minutes. Turn the spiedini, baste with the marinade, and cook until the chicken is just done, 5 to 6 minutes. Serve immediately.

Rosemary Chicken with Vegetables and Tomato Cumin Sauce

SAUCE

2 tablespoons canola or other
light vegetable oil

2 cups chopped onions

One 28-ounce can whole peeled plum
tomatoes, drained, their liquid reserved

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 cup Italian parsley leaves

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 large chicken cutlets
(about 3 pounds total), pounded
to 1/4 inch thickness

16 garlic cloves

2 teaspoons fresh rosemary leaves,
or 1 teaspoon dried

1/3 cup dry sherry

1/4 cup sherry wine vinegar
(see page 14)

1/3 cup canola or other light vegetable oil

Freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon crushed cumin seeds

3 medium zucchini,
cut lengthwise into thirds

2 red or yellow bell peppers, cored,
seeded, and cut into 1-inch strips

24 small shiitake or domestic mushrooms

Serves 4 to 6

If you love the taste of rosemary, you'll adore this dish. Redolent of the herb, cumin-laced and full of fresh vegetables, it's delicious, all-in-one eating. If you have sprigs of the beautiful, spiny rosemary, do use them as a garnish.

1. To make the sauce, in a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions and saute until soft and just beginning to brown, about 10 minutes.

2. In a food processor or blender, combine the onions; tomatoes, cumin, and parsley and puree. Thin the sauce if necessary with the reserved tomato liquid. Season to taste with the salt and pepper. Reserve.

3. Place the chicken in a large bowl. In the food processor or blender, combine the garlic, rosemary, sherry and vinegar; oil, pepperm to taste and cumin seeds and process to blend well.

4. Pour two-thirds of the marinade over the chicken, toss, and reserve. Place the vegetables in a medium bowl, brush with the remaining marinade, and set aside. Marinate both the chicken and the vegetables, covered and refrigerated, for at least 1 hour and not more than 4 hours.

5. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Oil the grill or a grilling rack and grill the vegetables over high heat, 4 inches from the heat source, until just cooked through, or broil, about 4 minutes for the mushrooms, 2 to 3 minutes for the zucchini and peppers, turning to cook evenly. Remove and keep warm. Grill the chicken over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source until just done, 6 to 7 minutes per side, or broil, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Place the chicken on a platter, surround with the vegetables, and serve with the sauce drizzled over or on the side.

Minted Mustard Chicken

We Americans neglect mint in our cooking. A symbol of hospitality, it is used widely in Middle Eastern and North African cooking, perhaps most famously in Moroccan tea. This dish glorifies fresh, peppery mint in collaboration with mustard - the dominant ingredients in a piquant marinade for the chicken.

Yes, the recipe calls for both fresh and dried mint; depending on your source and time of year, one may be more pungent than the other. Together, they make this dish special. By the way, this recipe calls for lemonade concentrate. Made basically from lemon juice, water, and a sweetener (buy a preservative-free brand with as few additional ingredients as possible), it's perfect in recipes requiring a greater depth of flavor than lemon juice alone can provide. A good trick to know.

Two 2 1/2- to 3-pound chickens, all visible fat removed, cut into eighths, or 6 large chicken cutlets (about 3 pounds total)

3 garlic cloves

1/4 cup Dijon mustard

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon frozen lemonade concentrate

2 teaspoons dried mint

1/2 cup fresh mint leaves, plus additional sprigs for garnish

1/2 cup parsley leaves

Juice of 1 lemon

Serves 6

1. Place the chicken in large nonreactive bowl. In a food processor, combine the garlic, mustard, oil, concentrate, dried and fresh mint, and lemon juice. Process until well mixed.

2. Pour the marinade over the chicken and marinate, covered, in the refrigerator, for at least 30 minutes or up to 3 hours.

3. Prepare a grill. Drain the chicken, reserving the remaining marinade. For chicken pieces, preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the pieces skin side down on large baking sheets with rims and bake for 20 minutes, reserving the pan juices. Finish cooking on the grill over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, or broil, turning as needed, until juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Grill chicken

cutlets over medium heat 4 inches from the heat source until just done, 6 to 7 minutes per side, or broil, 3 to 4 minutes per side.

4. Put the remaining marinade in a small saucepan (add 1/4 cup water if using cutlets). Add any pan juices, bring to boil, and boil for 2 minutes. Turn off heat and spoon off fat. Pour over the cooked chicken, garnish with the mint sprigs, and serve.

Mexican Chicken Fajitas

Fajitas are great fun and delicious when homemade. Though you can wrap the grilled chicken strips and peppers for these before serving them, people love assembling fajitas at table. Just put out the tortillas, fillings, and accompaniments, and everyone digs in.

MARINADE

- Juice of 4 limes
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper, or to taste
- 1/2 pounds chicken cutlets
- 2 Vidalia onions (or other sweet onions),
peeled and quartered
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded,
and quartered
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded,
and quartered
- 2 packages 6-inch flour tortillas,
at room temperature

FILLINGS AND ACCOMPANIMENTS

- 3 cucumbers, peeled and cut into
1/4 inch dice
- 6 plum tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 2 cups shredded romaine or
iceberg lettuce
- 1 cup Red Table Salsa (page 224)
- 1/4 cup fresh coriander leaves
(cilantro), snipped
- 1/2 cups Guacamole (page 221)

Serves 6 to 8

The marinade for the chicken is good used with almost anything. To be more specific, try the marinade with steak or kebabs made with turkey; it will keep refrigerated for a week or two.

This is really an easy dish that's a whole meal; great for entertaining.

1. To make the marinade, in a large nonreactive bowl, combine the lime juice, olive oil, garlic, cumin, salt, and pepper and mix well. If broiling the chicken (rather than grilling it), cut the peppers into 1/2 inch strips (pre-cut peppers would be too difficult to handle on the grill). Add the chicken, onions, and the peppers to the marinade, cover, and marinate, refrigerated, 2 to 3 hours.

2. Preheat the oven to 200°F. Wrap the tortillas in foil and place in the oven to warm, about 30 minutes. Remove and keep warm.

3. Meanwhile, prepare a grill. Drain the chicken, onions, and peppers and grill over medium heat 4 inches from the heat source until both are just done, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Remove and cut the chicken and peppers into 1/2 inch strips. Alternatively, turn the oven control to broil after the tortillas have been removed and allow the broiler to preheat. Cut the drained chicken and peppers into 1/2 inch strips and place in a pan. Broil until just done, 2 to 3 minutes per side.

4. Place the chicken and peppers, fillings, and accompaniments in separate bowls or on plates. Put the tortillas on a platter or in a basket. Each diner fills and rolls his or her own tortillas and chooses accompaniments.

Be-All and End-All Barbecue Sauce Chicken

Everyone needs a great all-American barbecue sauce in their repertoire. The marvelous sauce used here for grilled chicken is truly the be-all and end-all of its kind - pungent-sweet with a fine burnished flavor note.

Besides being delicious, the sauce is healthier than those you can buy. Instead of corn syrups, fructose, colorings, and who can say what glop, this one contains molasses, honey; and tomato paste. Decidedly peppery, the sauce can be made even kickier with additional jalapeno or shakes of hot sauce.

You can also make the sauce ahead - it keeps refrigerated for up to three weeks; keep it on hand. The chicken is baked before grilling or broiling to ensure deep flavor and even cooking; you may, however, grill or broil it from start to finish (see Note).

Serve the chicken with Warm Fennel Slaw (page 185), baked beans, and Skillet White Cornbread (page 214).

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

6 garlic cloves, minced

1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced,
or 1 teaspoon hot sauce

1/4 cup tomato paste

1/2 cup blackstrap molasses

1/2 cup honey

2/3 cup cider vinegar

3/4 cup Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 tablespoon soy sauce

Two 3 1/2-pound chickens, all visible fat
removed and cut into eighths

Serves 6 to 8

1. In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, and jalapeno and cook, stirring well, until the onion is soft but not brown, 3 to 4 minutes.

2. Stir in the tomato paste, molasses, honey, vinegar, mustard, thyme, and soy sauce. Simmer for 10 minutes. Cool.

3. Place the chicken in a medium bowl. Add 1 1/2 cups of the sauce, coat the chicken well, and marinate, covered, in the refrigerator for 2 hours or up to overnight. Reserve the remaining sauce for brushing the chicken.

4. Prepare a grill and preheat the oven to 400°F (see Note). Place the chicken skin side down on trays and bake for 20 minutes. If finishing the chicken in the broiler, turn oven control to broil.

5. To finish the chicken, grill over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, or broil, turning as needed, until the juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Brush the chicken as needed with the remaining marinade and watch carefully to prevent burning. If the chicken browns too quickly, move the grill or broiler rack farther from the heat source. Serve immediately or at room temperature.

Note: If not prebaking, grill or broil the chicken, turning as needed, about 40 minutes.

Grilled Turkey Burgers on Pita Bread with Red Onion Confit

If you like the idea of light, lean turkey burgers better than you've liked the reality, these are for you. Made with onion, a bit of ketchup, and egg white, these burgers are moist and savory, as well as easy on the calories. They're served with a tart-sweet red onion confit on pita bread and make a fine meal.

The dish is easiest if you prepare the confit ahead. It keeps for up to six weeks refrigerated in a covered container and is also great with steak or on turkey sandwiches.

I serve the burgers with assorted mustards and good half-sour pickles, a bowl of lettuce, and a plate of sliced tomatoes.

RED ONION CONFIT

1/4 cup olive oil

2 pounds red onions, thinly sliced

1/3 Cup sugar

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground
black pepper

2 bay leaves

1/2 cup red wine vinegar

1/2 cup raspberry vinegar

Serves 6

1. To make the confit, in a large nonreactive saucepan, heat the oil over medium-low heat. Add the onions, sugar, salt, pepper, and bay leaves. Cover and cook until the onions are soft and translucent, about 30 minutes.

2. Uncover and add the vinegars. Turn the heat to high and cook, stirring constantly, until most of the liquid is gone, about 15 minutes. Allow to cool.

3. To make the burgers, in a large bowl, thoroughly combine the turkey, bread crumbs, ketchup, mustard, onion, egg white, and parsley with 2 tablespoons of hot water. Season with the salt and pepper. Shape the mixture into 8 patties and place on a waxed paper-lined tray. Cover and chill at least 1 hour.

BURGERS

2 pounds lean ground turkey

1/4 cup bread crumbs

2 tablespoons best-quality ketchup

2 tablespoons mustard

1/2 red onion, minced

1 egg white

1/2 cup chopped parsley

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Four 8-inch pocketless pita breads or
eight 6-inch pita breads with pockets

Serves 8

4. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Grill the burgers over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat or broil until cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Warm the pita bread on the grill, or sprinkle it lightly with water to keep it moist and warm it in the oven. Halve the pocketless pitas, if using, and place one half on each plate. Top the pitas with the confit and burgers. Alternatively, fill each of the pocketed pitas with a burger and some of the confit. Serve.

Marge Rosenthal's Grilled Chicken with Penne and Roast Vegetables

For this dish you make a pasta "sauce" with roasted tomatoes and garlic, caramelized asparagus, and peppers. Then grilled chicken breasts are sliced and combined with room temperature penne and the sauce. The result is spectacular, and makes a perfect summer dinner or Shabbat lunch.

12 plum tomatoes, quartered
lengthwise

1/2 teaspoon salt, plus additional

1/2 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon dried oregano

10 tablespoons olive oil

2 heads garlic, 2 cloves removed,
peeled, and crushed

2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed and
cut into 1 inch lengths

2 yellow bell peppers, cored, seeded,
and cut into 1 inch dice

6 ounces portobello mushrooms
stemmed and cut into 1 inch dice

1 pound penne

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Freshly ground black pepper

2 pounds chicken cutlets,
lightly pounded

Serves 4

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F

2. In a mixing bowl, combine the tomatoes, the 1/2 teaspoon salt, sugar, 1/2 teaspoon of the oregano, 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, and the crushed garlic cloves. Toss gently.

3. Cut off the tops (about 1/2 inch) from the garlic heads and put each head in the center of a square of aluminum foil. Pour 1 tablespoon of the olive oil over each and seal the foil squares by gathering the tops and twisting them gently.

4. Pour the tomato mixture into half a baking pan and place the wrapped garlic in the other half. Bake 30 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl, toss together the asparagus, yellow peppers, mushrooms, the remaining 1/2 teaspoon oregano, and 2 tablespoons of the oil. Reserve.

6. After 30 minutes, add the asparagus mixture to the pan next to the garlic pouches. Continue to cook an additional 15 minutes, then remove the garlic. Turn off the oven, keeping the pan mixtures warm. Allow the garlic to rest for 10 minutes.

- 7.** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler or a grill pan.
- 8.** Add the pasta to the water and cook until al dente, 8 to 10 minutes. While the pasta is cooking, unwrap the garlic and squeeze the softened cloves into a small nonreactive bowl. Mash with a fork, add the lemon juice, and 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Season to taste with the pepper and reserve.
- 9.** Coat the chicken with the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Season lightly with the salt and pepper. Grill the breasts outdoors over medium heat, about 4 inches from the heat source, turning once, until just cooked through, 6 to 7 minutes per side, or broil or cook in the grill pan, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Cut the chicken diagonally into 1/2 inch thick slices.
- 10.** Drain the pasta and toss with the mashed garlic mixture until well combined. Gently fold in the tomatoes, vegetables, and any juices that may have accumulated in the pan. Fold the chicken into the pasta, adjust the seasonings, and serve.

Tuscan Barbecued Chicken

This dish has its roots in the open-spit-grilled specialties of the Tuscan countryside. You can watch chickens turning slowly on spits there, becoming golden and sending the most incredible smells into the great outdoors.

You can recapture some of that pleasure with this garlicky, tomato-laced version, which is simple to make. The little bit of molasses in the marinade adds no sweetness of its own, but it effectively counteracts the acidity of some of the other ingredients, which is a good technique to keep in mind.

Serve this with Grilled Polenta (page 193).

MARINADE

2 shallots, peeled

2 teaspoons molasses

2 tablespoons tomato paste

8 garlic cloves, peeled

1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary

2 teaspoons fresh oregano,
or 1 teaspoon dried

12 fresh basil leaves, or
2 teaspoons dried

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

1/2 cup dry red wine

Two 2 1/2 to 3 pound chickens, all visible
fat removed, cut into eighths

1/4 cup dry red wine

Serves 6 to 8

1. To make the marinade, in a food processor, combine the shallots, molasses, tomato paste, garlic, rosemary, oregano, basil, vinegar, and wine. Pulse until the vegetables are finely chopped.

2. In a large bowl, combine the chicken and the marinade. Stir to coat the chicken well, cover, and refrigerate for 4 to 6 hours or overnight.

3. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Remove the chicken from the marinade and drain; reserve the marinade. Grill the chicken over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, turning frequently, until the juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a fork, 30 to 40 minutes, or broil, turning once, 10 to 12 minutes per side.

4. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the remaining marinade with the wine. Bring to a boil, turn down the heat, and simmer to reduce, about 10 minutes. Serve the chicken immediately or at room temperature with the sauce.

Tennessee Barbecued Chicken

Folks from Tennessee prize "dry" barbecue, which is unsauced during cooking. This Tennessee style barbecued chicken celebrates that preference. Its marinade uses apple juice concentrate, which provides just the right amount of sweet-tart flavor. The finished dish, which has a delicate barbecued savor, is the perfect antidote to the many "red" barbecues people often make.

Serve this chicken with Skillet White Cornbread (page 214), Warm Fennel Slaw (page 185) or potato salad.

MARINADE

One 12-ounce can frozen apple juice concentrate, thawed

1/2 cup best-quality ketchup

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

2 teaspoons dried thyme

8 garlic cloves

2 small onions, quartered

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon celery seed

1/4 cup Dijon mustard

3/4 cup parsley leaves

Few shakes hot sauce, or a bit of harissa (see page 11), optional

Two 2 1/2- to 3-pound chickens, all visible fat removed and cut into eighths

Serves 6 to 8

1. To make the marinade, in a food processor, combine the apple juice, ketchup, vinegar, thyme, garlic, onions, oil, celery seed, mustard, parsley, and hot sauce. Process until smooth.

2. In a large bowl, combine the chicken and the marinade and marinate, covered, in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

3. Prepare a grill (alternatively, the chicken can be broiled; see step 4). Preheat the oven to 400°F. Remove the chicken from the marinade and place the marinade in a small saucepan. Place the chicken skin side down in a baking pan. Bake the chicken for 20 minutes.

4. If not grilling the chicken, turn up the oven control to broil. Remove the chicken from the oven and grill over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, or broil, turning as needed, until the juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes.

5. Meanwhile, bring the marinade in the saucepan to a boil, turn down the heat, and simmer to reduce slightly for 10 minutes. Serve the chicken with the marinade warm or at room temperature.

Grilled Chicken Breasts with Cider Sauce and Sautéed Apples

It's fall, the air is crisp, the leaves are turning, and you have bowls of just-picked apples from the farmer's market. Friends are coming for dinner-what do you serve?

This elegant dish, a true apple celebration. In it, apples appear in a tart-sweet cider-based sauce and a luscious fruit accompaniment for grilled chicken breasts. The dish is ideally

made with Jonagold apples, Pippins, or any of the great heirloom apple varieties available in the fall - but it works beautifully, too, with everyday types. Serve the chicken with wild rice or Basmati Rice (page 210) and steamed green beans - and enjoy the warm apple aromas that fill the house when you make it.

1 tablespoon margarine or vegetable oil

2 garlic cloves, crushed

3 tablespoons sugar

3 cups apple cider

4 whole cloves

One 1/2 inch piece cinnamon stick, or 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1/4 cup sweet white wine, such as Sauternes

1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon arrowroot

2 tablespoons Chicken Stock (page 61), or good instant or low-sodium canned broth, or water

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 large, firm apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1/2 inch slices

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, or 1/4 teaspoon dried

6 medium chicken cutlets (about 2 1/2 pounds total)

2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley

Serves 4 to 6

1. In a heavy 3-quart saucepan, heat the margarine over medium heat. Add the garlic and saute until it has softened, about 3 minutes. Add the sugar and cook, stirring, until the sugar turns golden brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the cider (stand back, the mixture can splatter). Add the cloves, cinnamon, lemon juice, and wine.

2. Return the pan to the stove. Increase the heat and bring the mixture to a boil, stirring to dissolve the caramel. Lower the heat and simmer until the mixture is smooth and slightly reduced, about 20 minutes.

3. In a small bowl, dissolve the arrowroot in the stock. Whisk it into the sauce and return the sauce to the heat. Simmer, whisking, until the sauce is clear and lightly thickened, about 1 minute. Season to taste with the salt and pepper, strain out the solids, and keep warm.

- 4.** Lightly coat a large skillet with vegetable oil spray. Warm it over low heat and in it arrange the apple slices in a single layer. Saute gently, turning once, until lightly browned, 5 to 8 minutes. Carefully remove the apples with a spatula and set aside.
- 5.** Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler or a grill pan. If using a grill pan, spray it first with olive oil spray.
- 6.** In a small bowl, combine 6 tablespoons of the sauce with the mustard and the thyme and brush the chicken cutlets with the mixture. Grill the cutlets over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source until golden, 6 to 7 minutes per side. Alternatively, broil or cook in the grill pan, about 3 minutes per side. Serve the cutlets with the sliced apples, drizzle the sauce over both, and sprinkle with the parsley. Pass additional sauce separately.

Butterflied Grilled Rock Cornish Chickens with Chinese Marinade

Unstuffed rock cornish chickens (Empire's designation for these small birds) have a delicate but pronounced flavor; and are easy to grill when butterflied. For this dish, the chickens are first marinated in a classic Chinese marinade that is good also with lamb chops or flank steak. Serve the birds with Sesame Coriander Sauce (page 242) and fresh sugar snap peas for an elegant meal that's particularly nice for summer.

MARINADE

2 tablespoons frozen orange juice concentrate

1/2 cup low-sodium soy sauce

1/2 cup hoisin sauce

1/2 cup honey

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

6 garlic cloves

One 1- to 2-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 bay leaves

4 rock cornish chickens, 2 1/2 to 3 pounds each, rinsed and soaked (see page 20), trimmed of all visible fat, backbone removed, and butterflied if 2 1/2 pounds or under, otherwise split in half

Serves 4 to 6

1. To make the marinade, in a food processor, combine the concentrate, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, honey, lemon juice, garlic, ginger, thyme, and pepper. Pulse to chop the garlic and ginger roughly. Add the bay leaves.

2. Place the chickens in a nonreactive pan or container with a fitted cover. Add the marinade, cover, and marinate, refrigerated, for at least 2 hours or as long as overnight. Turn the chickens twice while marinating.

3. Bring the chickens to room temperature, about 20 minutes. Drain the marinade, place it in a small saucepan, and simmer 20 minutes to reduce. Reserve.

4. Prepare a grill or preheat the oven to 400°F if broiling. To grill, cook the chickens over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, bone side down, about 20 minutes. Brush with the marinade, turn, and cook until the juices run clear when the chickens are pierced at the

joints, about 20 minutes more. To broil, place the chickens in a pan and prebake them skin side down 20 minutes. Turn the chickens and brush with marinade. Turn the oven control to broil and broil the chickens until the juices run clear when the joints are pierced with a fork, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve half a chicken per person or quarter the chickens and pass them on a large platter.

Grilled Sesame Gourmettes

Gourmettes are Empire's name for the small drumsticklike parts of chicken wings. It's a pleasure to be able to buy them in four pound bags - they're succulent mouthfuls that work perfectly for all sorts of informal meals (I love to serve them for picnics). Here, gourmettes are marinated in a tahini- and honey-flavored bath, grilled, and served-simple and good.

You could also use chicken parts for this or a three pound bird cut into eighths. I like to accompany the dish with a tabbouleh or cucumber salad or coleslaw.

MARINADE

One 2 inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled
and put through a garlic press

1/4 cup soy sauce

1/2 cup toasted sesame tahini

1 1/2 tablespoons honey

1 tablespoon sesame seeds

6 garlic cloves, peeled

4 pounds gourmettes (see Headnote)

1/4 cup chopped fresh coriander leaves
(cilantro), snipped chives, or sliced
scallions, for garnish

Serves 6

1. To make the marinade, in a food processor or blender, combine the ginger, soy sauce, tahini, honey, sesame seeds, and garlic. Process until well blended.

2. Place the chicken in a large nonreactive dish about 2 inches deep. Make no more than 2 layers. Pour the marinade over, making certain that the pieces are evenly coated; use a brush if necessary. Cover and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours at least, or as long as overnight.

3. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Remove the gourmettes and shake off excess marinade. Grill over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, turning as needed until brown and crispy, or broil, about 15 minutes total. Garnish with the chopped coriander and serve.

African Spice-Rubbed Drumsticks with Banana Boats

Recipes can begin with an idea - or a bag of groceries. This one started with bananas and the wish to pair them, African style, with chicken. I decided to grill banana halves in their skins and serve them with drumsticks that had been rubbed with black pepper: spices, and a touch of sugar to "open up" the flavors. The result was this utterly tantalizing dish, African in its play of heat, sweet, and warm fruitiness.

For a portable meal, serve the grilled drumsticks with Honey-Banana Chutney instead of the boats. The dish relies on good chili powder; keep trying brands until you find one that rings the bell. Multiply that ring by two or three if you like things spicy!

RUB

1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

2 tablespoons paprika

2 tablespoons chili powder

1 tablespoon dark brown sugar

1 tablespoon cracked or very coarsely
ground black peppercorns

2 tablespoons dried oregano

3 pounds chicken drumsticks

4 firm, barely ripe bananas, unpeeled

1/2 to 1 tablespoon canola or
vegetable oil spray

Serves 4 to 6

1. To make the rub, using a fork, combine the cumin, paprika, chili powder, brown sugar, peppercorns, and oregano in a bowl. Mash any lumps.

2. Oil the drumsticks lightly. Roll the drumsticks in the rub, place on a pan or in a dish, and refrigerate, covered, at least 2 hours or as long as overnight.

3. Twenty minutes before cooking, remove the drumsticks from the refrigerator. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Grill the drumsticks over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, turning as needed, until brown and crisp, about 30 minutes, or broil, turning once, about 12 minutes per side.

4. Meanwhile, slice the unpeeled bananas in half lengthwise. Coat or spray

the flesh with the vegetable oil. About 5 minutes before the chicken is done, place the bananas on the grill or under the broiler, flesh side towards the heat, and cook until the flesh has softened and is sizzling, 3 to 5 minutes. If there is insufficient room to cook the chicken and bananas simultaneously, finish the chicken, keep warm, and grill the bananas. Serve the bananas and chicken together.

Grilled Chicken with Melon Salsa and Tender Greens

MARINADE

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
3 small garlic cloves, pressed
Pinch of kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon canola or other vegetable oil

4 medium chicken cutlets (about
1 1/2 pounds total)

SALSA

1 1/2 cups ripe honeydew melon
cut into 1/4-inch dice
1 1/2 cups ripe cantaloupe cut into
1/4 inch dice
1/2 teaspoons grated peeled fresh ginger
5 tablespoons minced scallion,
white and green parts
1 teaspoon seeded and minced
jalapeno pepper
Juice of 1 lime
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
Leaves from 1 head Boston lettuce or
other tender greens
1 teaspoon walnut or hazelnut oil
8 fresh mint leaves, cut into thin strips

Serves 4

A salsa need not be red, coriander-spiked, and incendiary. A gingery salsa made with honeydew melon, cantaloupe, and a touch of jalapeno is a brilliant accompaniment, and perfect with lightly charred grilled chicken.

Use only ripe melons for the salsa. The fruit you want has no greenish cast, a stem end that yields slightly to pressure, and a fragrant melon smell. This dish is a summertime treat; serve it with Skillet White Cornbread (page 214) or - even better - fresh Gingerbread Madeleines (page 215).

1. To make the marinade, in a medium bowl, combine the lime juice, garlic, salt, pepper, and oil. Add the chicken, turn to coat well, and marinate, refrigerated, 15 to 20 minutes.

2. To make the salsa, in a second medium bowl, combine the melons, ginger, scallion, jalapeno, lime juice, and salt. Refrigerate until cold.

3. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler or a grill pan. If using a grill pan, spray it first lightly with vegetable oil. Grill the breasts outdoors over medium heat, about 4 inches from the heat source, turning as necessary, until just cooked through, 6 to 7 minutes per side, or broil or cook it in the grill pan, about 3 minutes per side.

4. Toss the lettuce leaves with the oil and divide among 4 plates. Cover with the chicken and top with the salsa. Garnish with the mint and serve.

Turkish Chicken with Grilled Pita

The merchants in the Istanbul spice market sell a wonderful spice mixture in large cellophane tubes, which are unlabeled. Each spice in the blend is arranged separately in the tube and combines with the others only when the tube is emptied. After buying and cooking with the delicious blend, I was determined to solve the mystery of its composition. Three different spice vendors were consulted and, at last, the spice code was cracked: cumin, turmeric, sweet paprika, oregano, black pepper, and sumac. Eureka!

The blend is featured in this pungent grilled chicken dish served with grilled pita. You'll love its flavor so much, you'll want to add Turkish spice to everything you cook. For a very special meal, serve the chicken and pita with grilled vegetables and Skordalia (page 245).

MARINADE

Juice of 6 lemons

1/4 cup Turkish spice (see Note)

1 cup Dijon mustard

14 garlic cloves, peeled

4 sprigs rosemary, chopped,
or 2 teaspoons dried

1/4 cup olive oil

1 tablespoon molasses

3 tablespoons lemonade concentrate

1 tablespoon tomato paste

Two 3-pound chickens, all visible fat
removed and cut into eighths

4 pocketless 8- to 10-inch pita breads,
for serving

Serves 4 to 6

1. To make the marinade, in a nonreactive bowl, combine the lemon juice, Turkish spice, mustard, garlic, rosemary, oil, molasses, concentrate, and tomato paste. Add the chicken, turn to coat well, and marinate, refrigerated and covered, 2 to 3 hours or overnight. When ready to cook, bring the chicken to room temperature.

2. Prepare a grill or preheat a broiler. Grill the chicken over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source, turning as necessary, until the juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a fork, about 40 minutes, or broil, turning once, 10 to 12 minutes per side.

3. Five minutes before the chicken is cooked, add the pita breads to the grill and allow to warm and char slightly. If broiling, moisten the pita with water, wrap in foil, and warm in the oven. Slice the pita into wedges and serve with the chicken.

Note: To make Turkish spice, combine in a glass jar with lid 1/4 cup ground cumin, 1/4 cup turmeric, 3 tablespoons sweet paprika, 1/4 cup oregano leaves, 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, and 1/4 cup sumac. Shake and use or store in the freezer for up to 1 year.

Chicken Gourmettes with Lekvar

Chicken gourmettes - chicken wing "drumsticks" - are versatile, bite-size morsels. They're great for an informal dish like this, which features lekvar or sweet-tart prune butter. The lekvar-based sauce is used to baste the chicken and as an accompanying dip. I love double-duty sauces like this one, which provides a double depth of flavor.

Serve the gourmettes with coleslaw, Summer Corn and Cucumber Salad (page 186), or Sushi Rice (page 211). Any unused sauce can be kept under refrigeration for two weeks.

1/2 Cup lekvar (prune butter; available at specialty food markets) or apple butter

1/2 Cup dry sherry

2 tablespoons soy sauce

One 1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled

2 scallions, green and white parts, cut into 2-inch pieces

1 tablespoon peanut oil

4 garlic cloves

1 tablespoon honey

1/2 cup fresh coriander leaves (cilantro), plus 1 tablespoon chopped coriander leaves, for garnish

1/2 to 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded

4 pounds chicken gourmettes

Serves 4

1. In a food processor, combine the lekvar, sherry, soy sauce, ginger, scallions, oil, garlic, honey, and 2 tablespoons of hot water. Pulse 4 to 5 times to chop the vegetables and process to blend, about 1 minute. Add the 1/2 cup coriander leaves and jalapeno, and pulse 2 to 3 times to combine. Scrape down the work bowl and divide the mixture into 2 parts.

2. Dry the gourmettes well and brush them with some of the lekvar mixture. Turn the pieces to coat them completely. (At this point, you can refrigerate the gourmettes overnight and finish them later.)

3. Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Grill the gourmettes over medium heat about 4 inches from the heat source or broil, turning as needed, until the gourmettes are nicely browned and cooked through, about 15 minutes. Garnish the gourmettes with the chopped coriander and pass with the reserved lekvar sauce. (Do not serve with any sauce used for brushing the uncooked gourmettes.)