

Story by ALBERT STUMM

For great grilled chicken, Filipinos crack a can of soda

Lemon-Lime Lacquered Grilled Chicken



The secret to achieving the lacquer on this grilled chicken? Lemon-lime soda.

Lemon-Lime Lacquered Grilled Chicken (Inihaw Na Manok)

Start to finish: 50 minutes, plus marinating | Servings: 4

OFTEN REFERRED TO as Filipino chicken barbecue, inihaw na manok (which translates as “grilled chicken”) commonly includes multiple sweet ingredients, the most intriguing being lemon-lime soda such as Sprite or 7UP. With sweetness tempered by tangy vinegar, salty soy sauce and savory garlic and black pepper, the marinade produces nicely lacquered skin. Gas grills vary in heat output; check the browning on the chicken when you uncover the grill for the first basting—if the bottoms threaten to scorch, shut off the burners under the chicken. If you cook both breasts and legs, make sure to take the internal temperatures of the different parts and

remove the pieces as they are done cooking, as white meat is done at about 160°F and dark meat at about 175°F.

Don't flip the chicken or place the pieces directly over the fire until the final minutes of cooking. The basting sauce contains a good dose of sugar and will burn if it gets too much direct heat. —LAURA RUSSELL

- ¾ cup cider vinegar
- ½ cup ketchup
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 6 tablespoons packed light or dark brown sugar
- 6 medium garlic cloves, peeled
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
- Kosher salt
- 1 cup lemon-lime soda, such as Sprite or 7UP
- 3 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts, thighs and/or drumsticks, trimmed and patted dry
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

■ **In a blender**, combine the vinegar, ketchup, soy sauce, sugar, garlic, bay peppercorns and 1½ teaspoons salt. Blend until well combined and the bay leaves are broken into tiny bits, 15 to 30 seconds. Pour the mixture into a large bowl, then stir in the soda.

■ **If using chicken breasts**, use a sharp chef's knife to cut each in half crosswise. Cut 2 or 3 diagonal slashes about ½ inch deep through the skin and meat of each piece of chicken. Add the chicken to the marinade and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours.

■ **Prepare a charcoal or gas grill** for indirect cooking. For a charcoal grill, spread a large chimney of hot coals evenly over one side of the grill bed; open the bottom grill vents and the lid vent. Heat the grill, covered, for 5 to 10 minutes, then clean and oil the grate. For a gas grill, turn all burners to high and heat, covered, for 15 minutes, then clean and oil the cooking grate; leave the primary burner on high and turn the remaining burner(s) to low.

■ **While the grill heats**, transfer the chicken to a large plate, allowing the marinade to drip off. Pour the marinade into a medium saucepan, bring to a simmer over medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until reduced to 1 cup, about 20 minutes. Stir in the lime juice and set aside. Set aside ½ cup for serving; use the remainder as a basting sauce.

■ **Place the chicken**, skin side up, on the cooler side of the grill. Cover and cook for 15 minutes. Generously brush the pieces with basting sauce, then re-cover and cook until the thickest part of the breasts, if using, reaches 160°F or the thickest part of the thighs and drumsticks, if using, reaches 175°F, another 15 to 20 minutes.

■ **Brush the chicken** with the basting sauce, then flip the chicken skin side down onto the hot side of the grill. Cook until deeply browned, about 1 minute. Brush the bone side with more basting sauce, then flip a final time and cook until deeply browned, about 1 minute. Transfer skin side up to a platter and let rest for about 5 minutes. Serve with the reserved sauce.

Photo: Connie Miller of GB Creatives; Styling: Christine Tobin