

Middle Eastern-Inspired Herb and Garlic Chicken

By **Melissa Clark**

Time 40 minutes, plus marinating

Rating ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ (2640)



Andrew Scrivani for The New York Times

This recipe was inspired by the Middle Eastern dried seasoning mix called za'atar, a combination of herbs (usually thyme, oregano and marjoram), sesame seeds and sumac, often spiked with salt. Here, fresh herbs are substituted for the dried, which, along with fresh parsley and mint and plenty of lemon and garlic, are used to marinate boneless chicken thighs. If you can't find sumac, just leave it out. It does add a nice tang and vibrant color, but the dish will work without it. Optimum marinating time here is 8 hours. But feel free to leave it for as little as 15 minutes or as long as 24 hours. If you would rather use white meat, substitute boneless skinless breasts but reduce the cooking time by a few minutes.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

6 boneless skinless chicken thighs
(about 1¾ pounds)

6 garlic cloves, grated on a
Microplane or minced

Juice and zest of 2 lemons

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil,
more for serving

2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley,
more for serving

2 tablespoons minced fresh mint

1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme

1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano
or marjoram

PREPARATION

Step 1

Combine chicken with all but 1 teaspoon of the grated garlic (save that teaspoon for the yogurt sauce), the zest and juice of 1 lemon, oil, parsley, mint, thyme, oregano, 1½ teaspoons salt, and the sesame seeds and sumac, if using. Cover and marinate for 15 to 30 minutes at room temperature; you can refrigerate it for up to 24 hours.

Step 2

Heat grill or broiler. If grilling, cook chicken over high heat until charred in spots, 4 to 7 minutes. Flip pieces and continue grilling until just cooked through, another 4 to 7 minutes. If broiling, arrange a rack 3 to 4 inches from flame. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and spread chicken out in a single layer. Broil chicken, turning halfway through cooking, until well colored and charred in spots, 4 to 7 minutes per side. Be careful that it doesn't burn.

1½ teaspoons kosher salt, more as needed

1 tablespoon sesame seeds, more for garnish (optional)

¾ teaspoon sumac, more for garnish (optional)

⅔ cup plain Greek yogurt, preferably whole milk yogurt

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

Step 3

While chicken cooks, place yogurt in a small bowl. Stir in the reserved grated garlic and lemon zest and season to taste with salt. Serve the chicken drizzled with olive oil, remaining lemon juice to taste, black pepper, parsley and sesame seeds and sumac, if using, with the yogurt alongside for dipping.

Private Notes

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