

yogurt-marinated grilled chicken with rice pilaf

BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS

Serves 4 to 6

Tools:

- [Silicone tongs](#)
- [Grill brush](#)
- [Meat thermometer](#)
- Large bowl
- Cast iron skillet, dutch oven, or stainless steel pot

Chicken:

- 1 1/2 cups plain or Greek yogurt
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 1/2 to 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts or thighs

- 2 tablespoons neutral cooking oil (grapeseed, avocado, canola, or vegetable)

Rice Pilaf:

- 1 cup white rice
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 to 3 cups fresh spinach, torn (I don't recommend frozen here)
- 1/2 cup raisins (or ANY dried fruit, chopped finely)
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds (or ANY toasted nut)

In a large bowl, stir to combine **1 1/2 cups plain yogurt, the juice of 1 lemon, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, and 1 teaspoon kosher salt**. Transfer *half* of the yogurt to a serving bowl and refrigerate it — this is your sauce.

If your chicken breasts seem very thick, cut them in half lengthwise, into two thinner planks.

To do this, place your hand atop the breast and press firmly down to hold it in place. Then, starting at the thick end of the breast, slice it in half.

Add **1 1/2 to 2 pounds chicken breasts or thighs** to what's left in the bowl of yogurt and toss to coat.

Marinate for 30 minutes at room temperature or for up to 6 hours in the refrigerator.

When you're ready to grill:

Grilling is tricky for many people, so I've written this recipe with a lot of detail. If you are a confident griller, here's the CliffsNotes version: Cook the pot of rice over indirect heat for 15 minutes. Cook the chicken over direct heat for 4 to 5 minutes per side.

Preheat your grill to 450°F with all burners on.

While the grill is heating up, prepare the rice. Add **1 cup of white rice** (no — you don't need to rinse it), **1 1/2 cups water, 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, the juice of 1 lemon, and 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt** to a cast iron skillet, Dutch oven, or stainless steel pot. Cover the pot tightly with a lid or foil.

Place the rice skillet onto the grill — on the burner on the far right side — and turn that burner to **low heat**.

Set a timer for 15 minutes — that's when we'll check on the rice. Keep an eye on the grill — you want the temperature to stay around 450°F so you might need to play around with the knobs to keep it there.

Meanwhile, soak a wadded-up paper towel in **2 tablespoons cooking oil**. When the rice has been cooking for 10 minutes, grab the oily wad with tongs, and rub it on the grill grates. **THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT STEP — DO NOT SKIP IT!**

When the 15-minute timer goes off, carefully peel the rice's foil back (there will be steam!!) and check rice for doneness. Cover and keep cooking (if needed) until the rice is plump, then remove the skillet from the grill.

Stir **2 to 3 cups torn spinach** and **1/2 cup raisins** (or other dried fruit) into the rice, then re-cover with the foil until dinnertime. Just before serving, sprinkle **1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds** (or other chopped toasted nut) over top.

Now it's time to cook the chicken on those grates you oiled. Cook the **chicken breasts** for about 4 minutes per side (if using chicken thighs, cook for 5 to 6 minutes per side).

When flipping, use a spatula — not tongs. The yogurt marinade can stick to the grill a bit, so you need to really scrape under there to release the chicken from the grill.

About 2 minutes into cooking the second side of the chicken, start checking the internal temperature. We want chicken breasts to reach 160°F (they have so little fat that they will continue cooking after you pull them off to reach 165°F) and thighs to be at 165°F. Remove the chicken from the grill when it's cooked through.

Slice the chicken and serve it over rice with a big ole dollop of the yogurt sauce.