RECIPE

Chicken Gumbo

A dark-roux gumbo of chicken, red beans and the onion, pepper and celery trio, served over brown rice for a cold-night dinner, with no shellfish.

MAKES

8 servings US Metric

TOTAL

2 h 15 min

Ingredients

- [ ] ⅓ cup canola oil
- [ ] ½ cup all-purpose flour
- [ ] 2 medium onions, chopped (about 2 cups, 300 g)
- [ ] 1 large green bell pepper, chopped (about 1 cup, 150 g)
- [ ] 3 celery stalks, chopped (about 1 cup, 120 g)
- [ ] 4 garlic cloves, minced
- [ ] 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- [ ] 1 ½ lb boneless, skinless chicken breast
- [ ] 1 can (15 oz) red kidney beans, drained and rinsed (about 1½ cups, 250 g)
- [ ] 2 bay leaves
- [ ] 2 tsp paprika
- [ ] 1 tsp dried thyme

Method

1. Stay at the pot for the roux. Hot oil and flour burns fast and sticks like hot sugar. Keep the handle turned in, use a long wooden spoon, wear no loose sleeves, and do not walk away or answer the phone. Chop everything first, so the vegetables are ready the moment the roux is.

2. Set a heavy Dutch oven on medium-low. Whisk in the oil and flour. Stir without stopping, scraping the corners, for 25 to 30 minutes, until the roux is the colour of milk chocolate. If you see black flecks or smell burning, throw it out and start over. Do not scrape it into the gumbo.

3. The moment the roux is dark, stir in the onions, pepper and celery. The cool vegetables stop the browning, and the pot will hiss and spit. Cook 5 minutes, until soft. Add the garlic, paprika, thyme, cayenne, garlic powder and black pepper for 1 minute.

- [ ] ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- [ ] 1 tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 1 tsp black pepper
- [ ] ½ tsp salt
- [ ] 4 cups cooked long-grain brown rice, to serve
- [ ] 3 green onions, sliced

4. Pour in the broth a cup at a time, stirring until smooth. Add the bay leaves and the salt. Bring to a boil, then turn it down to a gentle simmer. Simmer, partly covered, 40 minutes, stirring now and then, until the gumbo has thickened a little.

5. Lay the whole chicken breasts in the pot. Simmer 20 to 25 minutes more. Water boils near 203 °F here, so the simmering takes about a quarter longer than the 45 minutes sea-level versions use. Lift a breast onto a board when its thickest part reads at least 165 °F.

6. Shred the chicken with two forks and stir it back in with the beans. Simmer 10 minutes more, until the beans are hot through. Taste for salt. The broth already carries some. Take out the bay leaves.

7. Cook the brown rice (it takes about 45 minutes, so start it with the broth). Serve the gumbo over ½ cup of rice in each bowl and top with the green onions.

8. Cool leftovers within 2 hours, no more than 2 hours, then refrigerate for up to 4 days. Freeze flat in bags, two servings a bag, without the rice. Reheat on the stove until it comes to a boil.