



CHICKEN SPIEDIES

SERVINGS: 4 - 6 ACTIVE TIME: 30 mins TOTAL TIME: 4 hrs

Hailing from Binghamton, NY, Chicken Spiedies are delicious sandwiches made with pieces of grilled chicken that have been seasoned in a tangy lemon and herb marinade and then cooked on skewers. While the traditional spiedie was made with lamb cooked on a spiedo or spiedini (hence the name), this recipe captures the wholesome and comforting flavor I have come to love from this regional NY state classic.

Ingredients

- > 1 cup olive oil
- > The juice of three lemons
- > The zest of one lemon
- > 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- > 2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
- > 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- > 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- > 3 garlic cloves
- > 1 teaspoon red chili flakes
- > 2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- > 4 to 6 rolls or Italian bread
- > Bamboo or wooden skewers

Directions

1. To make the Chicken Spiedies, we will start by preparing the marinade. You can make relatively quick work of this using a blender or you can, of course, do it by hand. Either method will achieve the same results. If you plan to use a blender, combine the first nine ingredients in the blender and pulse until the herbs and garlic are pureed and the marinade is emulsified. Either way, you'll want to start by lightly dragging a microplane, or zester, across one of the lemons to get as much zest from it as you can and let it fall onto your cutting board. Run your knife through the zest a few times to cut down any large pieces. Transfer the zest to a mixing bowl or blender and cut the lemon in half, along with the other two lemons the recipe calls for. Using your hand or a fine mesh strainer, keep the seeds from falling into the bowl as you squeeze the juice from the lemon halves.
2. Next, smash three cloves of garlic using the flat side knife of your knife and finely mince them by running your knife through them several times. Add the minced garlic to the mixing bowl and then rinse and dry the herbs. The easiest way to lightly wash a bunch of herbs at once is to fill a mixing bowl with water, remove the herbs from their bundles, and let sit in the water for 10 seconds.

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Shopping List

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| <input type="checkbox"/> olive oil | <input type="checkbox"/> fresh basil | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> three lemons | <input type="checkbox"/> fresh parsley | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 to 6 rolls or Italian bread |
| <input type="checkbox"/> white wine vinegar | <input type="checkbox"/> garlic | <input type="checkbox"/> Bamboo or wooden skewers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fresh oregano | <input type="checkbox"/> red chili flakes | |

Lightly dunk the herbs back and forth to loosen any persistent soil, allow to drain for a moment and then spread them out on a kitchen towel or paper to let dry. Remove the parsley and oregano from their stems and then bring them together into a “ball” and then cut slivers. This is the easiest way to cut a bunch of fresh herbs at one time without bruising them too much. You are aiming for about two tablespoons each of the parsley and oregano. Next tear approximately 12 basil leaves from the stems and stack on top of each other. Roll the leaves up into a cylinder and then make thin slices. This technique is called “chiffonade.” Transfer the herbs to the mixing bowl.

3. To finish the marinade, add the teaspoon of red chili flakes, the cup of olive oil and the third of a cup of white wine vinegar to the mixing bowl and use a whisk to thoroughly combine and emulsify the ingredients. Lastly, season with salt and black pepper – a teaspoon of each will likely do the trick. Set the marinade aside for the moment while we focus on the chicken.
4. To break down the boneless, skinless chicken thighs, I recommend using kitchen shears. Regardless of whether you use shears or a knife, cut each thigh into quarters. While you are cutting the chicken, keep an eye out for any odd pieces of bone or cartilage your butcher may have missed, as well as any large pieces of fat.
5. Now that the chicken is cut and ready to go, roll out the top of the a gallon sized zip-top bag and put the chicken pieces in the bag. Before you pour the marinade over the meat, reserve a half cup of the marinade to drizzle

on the sandwiches later. Pour the remaining marinade into the bag and seal it. Thoroughly mix the chicken and the marinade with your hand and then unseal the bag at the very end to squeeze out all of the air, ensuring that the chicken pieces are fully emerged in the liquid. Allow the chicken to marinate for two to four hours in the refrigerator. Some of the more classic recipes call for an overnight soak, but since there is a fair amount of acid (lemon juice and vinegar) in this marinade, I’ve found that the sweet spot is in the two to hour range. Anything longer than that and the acid really starts to break down the chicken and it can become mushy.

6. About 30 minutes before your marinating time is done, soak the wooden or bamboo skewers in some water. If you have shorter skewers you might be able to get away with soaking them in a tall glass, but I usually just fill my trusty 9 x 13 baking pan with an inch of water. Soaking skewers before putting them on the grill will prevent the skewers from burning while the chicken cooks.
7. Now that both the chicken and the skewers have spent enough time in their respective “baths,” it’s time to get down to business. Prepare your grill for high heat, regardless of whether you are using charcoal or gas. While the grill is heating up, it is time to put the chicken pieces on the skewers. If you are using shorter skewers, limit them to 3 to 4 pieces per skewer. If using longer skewers, aim for 5 to 6 pieces. You basically want about an inch of space in between each piece of chicken to ensure they are cooking evenly and an inch or two of space at either end to make turning them on the grill a bit easier.



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8. When your grill is hot and your chicken is skewered, grill the chicken for about 5 to 6 minutes per side, or until the juices run clear or a thermometer registers 165 degrees. Since the pieces are pretty small, fully cooking them will be fairly quick. Once the chicken is cooked, remove them from the grill and let them rest for about 5 minutes before removing them from the stick. This will allow the juices to redistribute within the meat and help you not burn your fingers trying to remove the chicken. If you like your bread toasted, I'd recommend using the residual heat of the grill to toast the bread. Depending on what you and your guests prefer, you can either toss the cooked chicken pieces in the reserved marinade from before or serve it on the side and let the guests drizzle it on their sandwiches directly. The spiedies I've had have always been served "plain," but when I make them at home I like to add some grilled or sauteed onions and a piece of provolone cheese.