

Chicken Shawarma

Make authentic Middle Eastern chicken shawarma at home with this easy oven-roasted recipe. Tender, spiced chicken with yogurt sauce and pita bread.

10 min

PREP

40 min

COOK

50 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 2 lb chicken thigh
- 2 clove garlic
- 1 tbsp cilantro (coriander)
- 1 tbsp cumin
- 1 tbsp cardamom powder
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup strained yogurt
- 1 lettuce
- 2 tomato
- 1 onion
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pinch black pepper
- 4 bread

Instructions

1 Prepare the marinade

Mince 2 cloves of garlic and add to a large mixing bowl. Add 1 tablespoon ground coriander, 1 tablespoon cumin powder, 1 tablespoon cardamom, 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, 1 tablespoon smoked paprika, 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, 3 tablespoons olive oil, 1 pinch salt, and 1 pinch black pepper. Whisk together

until well combined.

2 **Marinate the chicken**

Cut 2 pounds chicken into thin strips or bite-sized pieces. Add chicken to the marinade and toss thoroughly until all pieces are evenly coated. Cover bowl with plastic wrap or transfer to a sealed container.

3 Refrigerate the marinated chicken for at least 4 hours or overnight for best flavor, up to 24 hours.

4 **Make the yogurt sauce**

Combine 1 cup Greek yogurt with remaining minced garlic, remaining lemon juice, and a pinch each of salt and pepper in a small bowl. Mix well and refrigerate until ready to serve.

5 **Prepare for cooking**

Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Slice 1 large onion into thin strips.

6 **Roast the chicken**

Remove chicken from marinade and spread in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet. Add sliced onions around the chicken. Roast for 25-30 minutes until chicken is golden brown and reaches an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C).

7 **Rest and prepare for serving**

Remove chicken from oven and let rest for 5 minutes. Warm 4 pita breads in the oven for 2-3 minutes or wrap in damp paper towels and microwave for 30 seconds.

8 **Assemble and serve**

Fill each warm pita with chicken shawarma and roasted onions. Add desired fresh vegetables like diced tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce. Drizzle with yogurt sauce and serve immediately.

Tips

Use chicken thighs for the juiciest results. The higher fat content keeps the meat moist and flavorful, while chicken breasts tend to dry out more easily during the high-heat cooking process.

Pound the chicken to an even thickness before marinating. This ensures uniform cooking and prevents some pieces from being overcooked while others remain undercooked.

Don't skip the overnight marination time. The longer marination allows the spices to penetrate deeply into the meat and the acids to tenderize the protein, resulting in more flavorful and tender shawarma.

Use a meat thermometer to check doneness. Chicken should reach an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) to ensure food safety without overcooking.

Let the cooked chicken rest for 5-10 minutes before slicing. This allows the juices to redistribute throughout the meat, ensuring each bite is moist and flavorful.

Warm your pita bread before serving. Heat them in a dry skillet or wrap in damp paper towels and microwave for 20-30 seconds to make them soft and pliable for wrapping.

Make the yogurt sauce ahead of time. The flavors meld and improve when the sauce sits for at least 30 minutes, and it can be made up to 2 days in advance.

Don't overcrowd the baking sheet when roasting. Give the chicken pieces space to ensure proper browning and prevent steaming, which would result in soggy rather than crispy edges.