



HAKKA SALT-BAKED CHICKEN

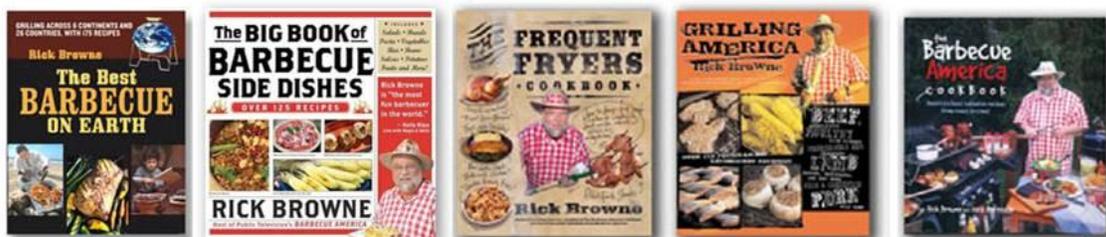
WITH 3 HAKKA DIPPING SAUCES

- 3 1/2 - to 4-pound chicken, rinsed and patted dry
- 1 tablespoon chinese rice wine or dry sherry
- 5 quarter-size slices of fresh ginger; lightly smashed
- 2 scallions; cut into 1/2 inch lengths and lightly smashed
- 5 cilantro sprigs; plus additional cilantro leaves for garnish
- 1 tablespoon Chinese 5-spice powder
- 2 tablespoons extra-dry vermouth
- 4 1/2 lb kosher salt
- Hakka dipping sauce

Rub the cavity of the chicken with the rice wine and stuff with the ginger, scallions, cilantro sprigs and 5-spices. Place the chicken, breast up, on a rack and brush the outside with the liqueur. Let the chicken stand in a cool, airy place until the skin is dry to the touch, about 2 hours.

Truss the chicken with string. Wrap the chicken in a single layer of cheesecloth; bring the ends around and tie them together on top of the chicken breast with string. The chicken should be tightly wrapped in a neat ball.

Pour the salt into a large heavy stockpot or spun-steel wok that will hold the chicken snugly. Turn the heat to moderately high and stir the salt frequently until it is very hot to the touch, about 10 minutes. Carefully pour all but 1 inch of the salt (about 6 cups) into a heatproof bowl. Set the chicken in the pot, breast up, and cover completely with the reserved hot salt. Cover the pot, reduce the heat to moderate and cook the chicken undisturbed on top of the stove for 1 1/2 hours. Check for doneness by brushing off the salt and piercing a thigh with a sharp knife. If the juices are still pink, re-cover with salt and continue to cook for another 15 to 30 minutes.





Push the salt aside and carefully remove the chicken, holding it by the knotted cheesecloth; try not to tilt the chicken and spill the juices. Set the chicken on a large platter and remove the cheesecloth and trussing strings.

Discard the salt. Carve the chicken or use a cleaver to chop it Chinese-style into bite-size pieces. Serve hot or at room temperature, garnished with cilantro leaves and accompanied by the Hakka dipping sauce.

Chili Sauce

- 1 tablespoon hot water
- 1 tablespoon Chinese chili sauce
- 1 teaspoon unseasoned Japanese rice vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar

In a small bowl, combine the water with the chili sauce, vinegar and sugar; stir to dissolve the sugar. Let stand for at least 15 minutes and stir before serving.

Garlic Sauce

- 2 tablespoons unseasoned Japanese rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon sugar

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar, garlic and sugar; stir to dissolve the sugar. Let stand for at least 15 minutes and stir before serving.

Ginger Sauce

- 1 tablespoon (packed) minced fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons peanut oil
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Put the ginger in a small heatproof bowl. Heat the oil in a small saucepan until it sends up a wisp of smoke, then pour it over the ginger and stir. Stir in the salt. Serve warm or at room temperature.

