



Chapter Ten

HOISIN CHICKEN AND PICKLED DAIKON



Gordon Ramsay Teaches Cooking II: Restaurant Recipes at Home

HOISIN CHICKEN AND PICKLED DAIKON

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This crispy chicken salad for me is a ‘get out of jail card,’ especially when you’ve got a big dinner party.

Chapter Review

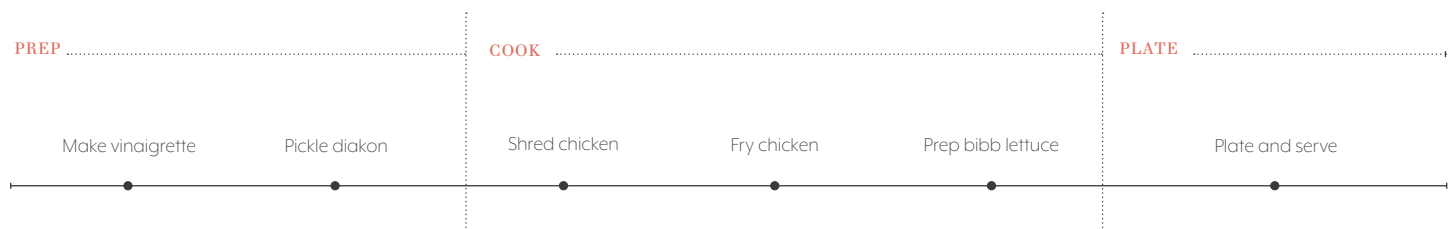
This is a versatile dish that can be plated as an appetizer or entree. It’s a time-saver if you’re having a dinner party because all of the components can be made ahead of time for quick assembly the day-of. Set the salad in the middle of the table so that guests can help themselves or plate individually if you’re serving it as the entree.

Gordon’s favorite parts of the chicken are the thigh and drum. Both have dark meat, which has more fat than white meat and therefore more flavor. A little extra fat also helps keep the meat moist. If you work with the chicken while it is still warm, the bones will easily slide out. Gordon likes to shred the meat by hand, but using a knife is just as effective.

Shallow frying the lightly-dusted chicken browns it and gives it a crispy texture without letting the shreds get tough and wiry. Fry the shredded chicken in batches and bring the oil back up to temp after each batch. If the oil gets too hot, turn off the gas and add cold oil to lower the temperature. You can use this technique with other proteins and for fritters that wouldn’t be able to keep their shape in a deep fry. In Chapter Eleven: Szechuan Crusted Chicken Breast, you’ll use shallow frying to cook a whole fish.

Gordon uses a “living” butter lettuce that comes with the root still attached for ultimate freshness and crunch. Trim off the base and fan out the leaves. If you must wash the lettuce, make sure the leaves are completely dried so that the vinaigrette will stick to the leaves. Layer each ingredient in between the leaves so that each leaf is like a lettuce cup with a bit of each component. Each bite should have contrast of the crispy chicken, crunchy lettuce, tart pickles, and spicy ginger. This is an interactive dish so do as Gordon says—go in with your hands, break off a leaf, roll it up, and eat.

RECIPE TIMELINE



HOISIN CHICKEN AND PICKLED DAIKON



Prep

- The chicken legs can be shredded two days in advance but the frying can only be done just before use or the chicken will lose its crunch.
- The pickled daikon and ginger can be done in advance and stored in a mason jar or vacuum sealed container in the refrigerator for up to a year.
- The vinaigrette can be prepared and refrigerated up to a week.

Ingredient Notes

- If you don't have a wok you can fry in a deep pan or wide-based pot.
- Daikon is a white Japanese radish milder than red radishes which work as a substitute if you cannot find daikon.
- Although chives are preferred in this dish for their delicate flavor, scallions are a good substitute. Fresh, vibrant scallions are preferred over wilting, sad chives so when you're shopping, choose what looks best.
- If you can't find living bibb lettuce use green leaf lettuce, romaine, or iceberg keeping in mind you'll have to alter the presentation and build the salad as you would lettuce cups.

Dietary Restrictions

- This dish can be made gluten-free with a gluten-free hoisin sauce.

Beverage Pairing

- Gordon suggests that you pair this dish with a New Zealand Pinot Gris with good acidity and slightly tropical fruity notes.

Hoisin Glazed Crispy Shredded Chicken Salad, Pickled Daikon, and Honey Mustard Vinaigrette

Serves 4-6

Five-Spice Seasoning

2 roasted chicken thighs and 2 legs,
shredded, skins julienned
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons rice flour
1 quart vegetable oil for frying
3 tablespoons hoisin sauce
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
1 Meyer lemon
1 tablespoon chives, sliced

It is easier to to shred the chicken thighs when the meat is still warm but it can be done chilled as well. Use your fingers to release the meat from the bones and shred into pieces about ¼ inch wide.

Add the shredded chicken to a medium size bowl. Mix the cornstarch and rice flour together and sift one tablespoon over the chicken. Toss together with your fingers and add more sifted cornstarch/rice flour if there are uncoated pieces.

Heat a large wok with one inch of vegetable oil on medium high heat until the oil temperature reaches 350°F. Test with a candy thermometer or one piece of chicken. If the oil begins to froth and sizzle rapidly it is hot enough. If the chicken floats to the bottom of the pan and there little movement from the oil, it is not hot enough.

Pour small batches of the dredged chicken onto a spider and shake off the excess flour. Slowly drop the pieces into the wok and shallow fry for 2 to 4 minutes, stirring frequently until crisped and golden brown but not dried out. If the oil stops sizzling it needs to be hotter so you will need to turn the heat on the stove up a notch. If the oil is smoking you can turn the flame off the stove for a second, add a small amount of oil at a time to cool down the hot oil, and turn the flame back to medium-high heat. When you add ingredients to hot oil it immediately lowers the temperature and the more ingredients you add at a time, the faster the oil temperature drops so it's best to fry in small batches. Drain on a sheet tray or plate lined with paper towels and season with salt.

Apply the same frying technique to the julienned chicken skin, without dredging in flour. The chicken skin will only need to fry for about 2 minutes to turn golden brown and crispy.

Mix the hoisin sauce with rice wine vinegar and lightly toss the crispy chicken in the sauce. Add lemon zest and chives. Season to taste if needed.

Hoisin Glazed Crispy Shredded Chicken Salad, Pickled Daikon, and Honey Mustard Vinaigrette

Serves 4-6

Pickled Daikon

2-inch x 2-inch in daikon piece, peeled and julienned

½-inch knob fresh ginger, peeled and julienned

1 cup sugar

1 cup rice wine vinegar

1 cup water

Heat the water, sugar, and vinegar in a medium saucepot over medium heat until the liquid comes to a boil and the sugar dissolves. Use a mandolin or knife to julienne the vegetables. Put the daikon and ginger into their own bowls. Pour the hot pickling liquid over each vegetable and let soak for 20 minutes before refrigerating. Chill before serving.

Honey Mustard Vinaigrette

1 teaspoon honey

1 teaspoon dijon mustard

¼ lemon for juice

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Whisk the honey, mustard, and lemon in a small mixing bowl.

Whisk in the olive oil and set aside.

Garnish

½ bunch scallions, sliced on the bias

1 large head Bibb or butter lettuce, root and base removed but core intact

Pull off any bruised leaves off the lettuce head. Set the lettuce core face down on a cutting board with the leaves facing up. Starting with the outer layer, wedge your hands between the leaves and the rest of the head. Pry open the leaves and flatten down with the palms of your hands. Repeat this step with all of the layers of the leaves until you are left with the last layer of the heart closed and the leaves open and flattened to resemble a blooming flower. Plate lettuce flower on a serving platter and drizzle each leaf with vinaigrette.

Spoon the fried chicken mixture evenly in between the lettuce layers starting from the bottom. Garnish evenly with pickled daikon and ginger. Add the scallions and finish with a few drizzles of the vinaigrette.