



Indoor Pulled Chicken with Sweet and Tangy Barbecue Sauce

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Our Indoor Pulled Chicken mimics the texture and flavor of outdoor slow-smoked pulled chicken in just a fraction of the time. We started by braising boneless, skinless chicken thighs in a mixture of chicken broth, salt, sugar, molasses, gelatin, and liquid smoke, which simulated the flavor of traditional smoked chicken. The gelatin and broth helped mimic the unctuous texture and intense chicken flavor of whole chicken parts. To mimic the richness of skin-on chicken, we skipped trimming the fat from the thighs and added the rendered fat back to the finished pulled chicken. Finally, we mixed the shredded meat with some of the barbecue sauce and cooked it briefly to drive off excess moisture.

INGREDIENTS

SAUCE

- 1 1/2 cups ketchup
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Do not trim the fat from the chicken thighs; it contributes to the flavor and texture of the pulled chicken. If you don't have 3 tablespoons of fat to add back to the pot in step 3, add melted butter to make up the difference. We like mild molasses in this recipe; do not use blackstrap. Serve the pulled chicken on white bread or hamburger buns with pickles and coleslaw.

- 1. FOR THE SAUCE:** Whisk all ingredients together in bowl. Set aside.

SERVES 6 TO 8

CHICKEN

- 1** cup chicken broth
- 2** tablespoons molasses
- 1** tablespoon sugar
- 1** tablespoon liquid smoke
- 1** teaspoon unflavored gelatin
- Salt and pepper
- 2** pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, halved crosswise
- Hot sauce

2. FOR THE CHICKEN: Bring broth, molasses, sugar, 2 teaspoons liquid smoke, gelatin, and 1 teaspoon salt to boil in large Dutch oven over high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add chicken and return to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is easily shredded with fork, about 25 minutes.

3. Transfer chicken to medium bowl and set aside. Strain cooking liquid through fine-mesh strainer set over bowl (do not wash pot). Let liquid settle for 5 minutes; skim fat from surface. Set aside fat and defatted liquid.

4. Using tongs, squeeze chicken until shredded into bite-size pieces. Transfer chicken, 1 cup sauce, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup reserved defatted liquid, 3 tablespoons reserved fat, and remaining 1 teaspoon liquid smoke to now-empty pot. Cook mixture over medium heat, stirring frequently, until liquid has been absorbed and exterior of meat appears dry, about 5 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and hot sauce to taste. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.

Technique: A New Way to Shred Chicken



Instead of using two forks to shred the chicken, we squeeze it gently with tongs. The meat is so tender that it falls apart easily into bite-size pieces.