

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Charcoal-Grilled Barbecued Chicken Kebabs

SERVES Serves 6

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

To ensure that the meat in our barbecued chicken kebabs recipe stayed moist, we started by tossing the chicken pieces with salt. After allowing the salt to penetrate the meat, we coated it in sugar, spices, and pureed bacon, which kept the chicken kebabs moist and flavorful as they cooked. We grilled each side of the kebabs until the meat was almost fully cooked and then brushed our prepared barbecue sauce recipe onto the kebabs, leaving them on the grill until the sauce had a chance to caramelize.



INGREDIENTS

Sauce

- ☐ ½ cup ketchup
- ☐ ¼ cup light or mild molasses

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

✳ We prefer flavorful thigh meat for these kebabs, but you can use white meat. Whichever you choose, don't mix white and dark meat on the same skewer since they cook at different rates. If you have thin pieces of chicken

☐ 2 tablespoons
grated onion (see
note)

☐ 2 tablespoons
Worcestershire
sauce

☐ 2 tablespoons
Dijon mustard

☐ 2 tablespoons
cider vinegar

☐ 1 tablespoon light
brown sugar

Kebabs

☐ 2 pounds boneless,
skinless chicken
thighs or breasts,
trimmed of excess
fat and cut into
1-inch cubes (see
note)

☐ 2 teaspoons
kosher salt

☐ 2 tablespoons
sweet paprika

☐ 4 teaspoons sugar

☐ 2 teaspoons
smoked paprika

☐ 2 slices bacon, cut
into 1/2-inch pieces


cut them larger than 1 inch and roll or fold them into approximately 1-inch cubes. Use the large holes on a box grater to grate the onion.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 FOR THE SAUCE: Bring all ingredients to simmer in small saucepan over medium heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce reaches ketchup-like consistency and is reduced to about 1 cup, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer 1/2 cup sauce to small bowl and set aside remaining sauce to serve with cooked chicken.

2 FOR THE KEBABS: Toss chicken and salt in large bowl; cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour.

3 Light large chimney starter three-quarters filled with charcoal (4 1/2 quarts, about 75 briquettes) and allow to burn until coals are fully ignited and partially covered with thin layer of ash, about 20 minutes. Arrange all coals in even layer over half of grill bottom, leaving other half empty. Position cooking grate over coals, cover grill, and heat grate until hot, about 5 minutes. Scrape grate clean with grill brush.

 4 12-inch metal skewers

4 While grill heats, pat chicken dry with paper towels. Combine sweet paprika, sugar, and smoked paprika in small bowl. Process bacon in food processor until smooth paste forms, 30 to 45 seconds, scraping down bowl twice during processing. Add bacon paste and spice mixture to chicken; mix with hands or rubber spatula until ingredients are thoroughly blended and chicken is completely coated. Thread meat onto skewers, rolling or folding meat as necessary to maintain 1-inch cubes.

5 Place kebabs over coals and grill, turning one-quarter turn every 2 to 2 1/2 minutes until well browned and slightly charred, 8 minutes for breasts or 10 minutes for thighs. (If flare-ups occur, slide kebabs to cool side of grill until fire dies down.) Brush top surface of kebabs with 1/4 cup sauce; flip and cook until sauce is brown in spots, about 1 minute. Brush second side with remaining 1/4 cup sauce; flip and continue to cook until brown in spots and instant-read thermometer inserted in center of meat registers 160 degrees for breasts and 175 degrees for thighs, about 1 minute longer. Remove kebabs from grill and let rest for 5 minutes. Serve, passing reserved barbecue sauce separately.