Beer Can Chicken

Beer can chicken, also known as “dancing chicken”, is a barbecue novelty that first became popular several years ago. The original concept was fairly simple. A chicken was cooked upright on the barbecue using a half-empty can of beer as a vertical roaster, thus making the chicken appear to be “dancing”.

The ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen does not recommend using a beer can or other beverage container on the barbecue; however, a wide variety of vertical roasters have been designed to make beer can chicken without the can. These roasters have a holder to hold beer or other liquid while keeping the chicken stable and in an upright position. This method of cooking leaves the skin exposed, making it extra crisp similar to a rotisserie chicken. In addition, the liquid in the holder heats up and creates steam, resulting in meat that is succulent and moist.

For extra flavour, use either a seasoning rub or a marinade before cooking a chicken on a vertical roaster. A marinade may also be used as the liquid in the holder of the roaster. Our ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen recipe for Beer Marinade is great to use for this purpose; follow the directions below.

Cooking a Chicken on a Vertical Roaster

Remove giblets from cavity of chicken; remove excess fat. Prepare Beer Marinade using recipe below. Reserve and refrigerate 2/3 cup (150 mL) marinade to use in holder of a vertical roaster. Pour remaining marinade into a heavy zip-lock plastic bag. Add chicken to bag and squeeze bag to coat chicken with marinade. Seal bag and place on a plate. Refrigerate, turning bag occasionally, for at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours. Remove from refrigerator and let stand for 20 - 30 minutes. Remove chicken from marinade; discard marinade in bag. Pour reserved marinade into holder of the vertical roaster. Lower chicken onto holder so holder fits inside body cavity. Chicken will appear to be standing upright. If vertical roaster does not have a drip pan to catch drippings, place roaster with chicken in a foil pan. Place on grid on natural gas barbecue. With lid down, cook chicken over low heat for 1 1/4 - 1 1/2 hours or until a meat thermometer registers 180°F (82°C) in the thigh and 170°F (77°C) in the breast. Remove chicken from roaster. Let stand for 20 minutes before carving.

BEER MARINADE

This robust marinade is versatile enough for either chicken or beef.

1 can (355 mL) beer 1 tbsp (15 mL) chili powder
1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped onion 1 tsp (5 mL) cumin
1/4 cup (50 mL) fresh lime juice 1 tsp (5 mL) salt
1/4 cup (50 mL) oil 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tbsp (25 mL) soy sauce 1 bay leaf

Combine all ingredients. Use to marinate chicken or beef. Allow chicken or beef to marinate for up to 24 hours in refrigerator. Discard marinade after using. Makes about 2 1/2 cups (625 mL).