

Roasted chicken thighs with sesame squash and smacked cucumber

PREP TIME
20 mins

COOK TIME
45 mins

SERVES
4

This dish works best when everything (or almost everything) is thrown in the same tray to roast. Here, the miso, sesame, sugar and soy roast into the chicken juices and bring a sticky and savoury sweetness. It's always useful to have a jar of miso in the fridge. It has a very long life and adds depth and a touch of the savoury to all things, even sweet recipes, and a little goes a long way. Make the cucumber 24 hours ahead if you'd like.

Ingredients

2 tbsp light soy sauce
2 tsp groundnut oil
2 tbsp white miso
pinch of brown sugar
1 tsp black sesame seeds
1 butternut squash, cut into large pieces, seeds removed
8 chicken thighs, skin on
handful of coriander leaves

For the cucumber

1 cucumber
1 garlic clove
thumb of ginger, peeled and grated
2 tsp sesame oil
1 tsp rice vinegar
(brown rice vinegar if you can find it)

1. Halve the cucumber lengthwise and remove the seeds. Bash the cucumber with a rolling pin so it breaks up. Cut the cucumber into 2 cm pieces and toss with salt. Leave to drain over the sink in a colander for 20 minutes.
2. Grate the garlic and ginger into a bowl, and mix with the sesame oil and vinegar. Toss through the drained cucumber, then chill in the fridge until needed. It will eventually be served fridge-cold.
3. Heat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas mark 6.
4. Mix the soy, oil, miso, sugar and sesame seeds and rub on to the squash in a bowl. Scatter it in one layer in a large roasting tray. Distribute the thighs, skin side up, amongst the squash and season the skin. If you can't fit both in, you can roast them separately and add a little of the squash marinade to the chicken pan with an extra splash of soy.
5. Roast on the middle shelf of the oven for 35 minutes, by which point the squash should be golden and tender and the thighs sticky and cooked through – prick them with a knife and make sure the juices run clear. If a little more cooking is needed, turn the oven down to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas mark 4 and cook for a further 10 minutes. Cover with foil if already well-browned. Allow the chicken to rest for 10 minutes.
6. Serve slices of the squash with the chicken, cucumber and a sprinkling of coriander.