

GRILLED CHICKEN THIGHS WITH BASIL-BACON SALSA

serves 4

You'll need 2 pieces of crispy, crumbled bacon for the salsa. It might be easiest to begin with that as this dish cooks fairly quickly and you need to make the salsa while the chicken grills.

- 8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs--about 1 1/3 pounds, fat pockets removed
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- Aleppo pepper or Piment d'Espelette (Can sub crushed red pepper--use less)
- 1 large tomato, chopped and drained on paper towels
- 6 large basil leaves, minced plus a sprig of basil for garnish
- 1-2 green onions, minced -- reserve a bit of the greens for garnish
- 1/4 jalapeño, seeded and deveined, minced--OPTIONAL
- 2 strips bacon, cooked to a crisp and crumbled

GRILL THE CHICKEN--15 minutes: Prepare/pre-heat grill--medium-high heat 4-5 minutes. In a large, deep bowl, toss thighs with 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper, and a good pinch of Aleppo pepper until well-coated. Grill 5-6 minutes on one side until dark brown grill marks appear. (*Meanwhile, make the salsa; see below.*) Turn chicken over and grill other side for approximately 5 more minutes or until thighs are pinkish-brown, have shrunk and are plump, and/or register 165 degrees F on a instant-read thermometer. (It's difficult to take the temperature of chicken thighs, as their thickness varies. You might just need to take one off and slice into the middle a bit to check for doneness. Luckily they are forgiving and stay fairly moist.)

MAKE SALSA WHILE CHICKEN COOKS--5 minutes: In a small bowl, gently stir together tomatoes, basil, green onions, jalapeño (if using), and cooked, crumbled bacon. Add a small pinch each salt and pepper.

TO SERVE--2 minutes: Lay the the cooked thighs on a platter, overlapping a bit, and spoon the salsa down the middle of the chicken pieces. Let the chicken rest a minute or so. Give the entire dish one last light sprinkling of salt and a generous grind of pepper. Garnish with the reserved chopped green onions and fresh basil. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature. Refrigerate leftovers promptly, well wrapped, for no more than 3 days.

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