Smoked Chicken Breast

Smoked chicken breast gets its flavor from gentle wood smoke and a paprika-garlic rub. Keep the smoker around 225°F (107°C), use mild apple or cherry wood, and cook to a measured 165°F (74°C). The 60 to 90 minute cooking window is an estimate, not a doneness test.



Prep	Cook	Additional	Total	Servings
10 min	75 min	5 min	90 min	4

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts / 680 g, in 4 portions
- 1 tablespoon olive oil / 15 ml
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

Instructions

1. Preheat the smoker to 225°F (107°C), following its instructions. Add apple or cherry smoking wood approved for your smoker; wood is equipment, not a food ingredient.

2. Pat the chicken dry and trim loose edges. Keep similar-size portions together; do not wash raw chicken.

3. Mix paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, pepper and thyme. Rub the chicken with oil, then distribute the seasoning over all sides.

4. Place the chicken on clean smoker grates with space between pieces. Insert a probe into the thickest part of one portion without touching the grate.

5. Smoke for roughly 60 to 90 minutes. Begin checking near 50 minutes, then verify every piece with an instant-read thermometer.

6. Remove each portion only after its thickest part reaches 165°F (74°C). Rest on a clean plate for 5 minutes and slice across the grain.

Time, Temperature & Doneness

Cook every chicken portion to 165°F (74°C) in its thickest part. Use an instant-read thermometer; exterior browning, meat color and clear juices are not reliable substitutes. Listed cooking times are estimates and vary with thickness and equipment.

Ingredient Notes & Substitutions

Wood: Mild fruit wood keeps the smoke flavor from overwhelming lean chicken.

Chicken: Very large breasts may take longer than the listed window.

Rub: This recipe does not include a wet brine; adding one changes the preparation time and salt level.

Tips for Success

Maintain steady smoker heat instead of repeatedly opening the lid.

Use clean, thin smoke rather than a heavy sooty plume.

Check each breast, not only the probe piece.

Slice after resting and save the released juices.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Cooking to a fixed clock time.

Adding excessive smoking wood.

Assuming a pink smoke ring proves the meat is undercooked or safe.

Recipe Variations

Peppery version: Increase black pepper to 1 teaspoon.

Herb version: Replace paprika with 1 teaspoon dried oregano.

Glazed version: Brush with 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce near the end; this adds an ingredient.

Serving Suggestions

Serve sliced with coleslaw and baked potatoes, or chill promptly for sandwiches and salads.

Storage

Refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly in shallow containers within 2 hours, or within 1 hour when exposed to temperatures above 90°F (32°C). Keep at 40°F (4°C) or below and use within 3 to 4 days.

Freezing

Freeze promptly cooled cooked portions airtight at 0°F (-18°C) or below for up to 3 months for best quality. Label with the date and thaw in the refrigerator. Continuous freezing preserves safety longer, but texture can decline.

Reheating

Reheat covered in a 350°F (175°C) oven with a small splash of water or broth until the center reaches 165°F (74°C). Check more than one spot; heat thin pieces only as long as needed.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does smoked chicken breast take?
About 60 to 90 minutes at 225°F (107°C) for these portions, but thickness and smoker performance matter.

Do I need to brine it?
No. This base recipe uses a dry seasoning rub and careful temperature checks.

Can smoked chicken remain slightly pink?
Smoke can affect color. Use a thermometer and reach 165°F (74°C), rather than relying on color.

Which wood is a good starting point?
Apple or cherry gives a milder smoke flavor than strong hardwoods.

Recipe & Sources

View the recipe on HowToCookChickenRecipes.com

Hey Grill Hey - smoking and glazing technique reference

FoodSafety.gov - safe minimum internal temperatures

FoodSafety.gov - cold food storage chart

FoodSafety.gov - prompt chilling and cross-contamination prevention