Vietnamese Chicken Recipes

Lemongrass chicken thighs with a bright fish-sauce and lime marinade, seared until caramelized.

4 SERVINGS	PREP 20 MINUTES	COOK 18 MINUTES	TOTAL 38 MINUTES



THE MASTER RECIPE

Boneless, skinless chicken thighs 1 1/2 lb (680 g), trimmed	**Brown sugar** 1 tbsp (12 g)
Fresh lemongrass 2 stalks, tender centers finely minced (about 2 tbsp)	**Neutral cooking oil** 1 tbsp (15 ml)
Garlic 3 cloves, minced	**Black pepper** 1/2 tsp (1 g)
Shallot 1 small, finely minced	**Steamed jasmine rice** 3 cups (about 570 g), to serve
Fish sauce 2 tbsp (30 ml)	**Scallions** 2, thinly sliced
Fresh lime juice 1 tbsp (15 ml)	**Cilantro + lime** 2 tbsp cilantro leaves + lime wedges, to serve

METHOD

Step-by-step instructions

Why it works: Lemongrass, garlic and shallot perfume the meat while fish sauce adds savory depth. A short marinade seasons the surface; searing creates browned edges without needing a long cook.

1. Mix the marinade. Combine lemongrass, garlic, shallot, fish sauce, lime juice, brown sugar, oil and black pepper. Transfer 2 tbsp to a clean cup and refrigerate it for finishing.

2. Marinate. Coat chicken with the remaining mixture in a covered container and refrigerate 15-30 minutes. Discard marinade that touched raw chicken.

3. Sear. Heat a large skillet over medium-high. Lift thighs from the marinade and let excess drip off. Sear in a single layer, 5-6 minutes per side, lowering heat if the sugar darkens too quickly. Cook in batches as needed.

4. Finish safely. Brush the reserved clean marinade over the chicken in the final 1-2 minutes; add a tablespoon of water if the pan is dry. Check the thickest thigh with an instant-read thermometer and cook to 165 F (74 C).

5. Rest and serve. Rest chicken 3-5 minutes, slice and spoon over any pan juices. Serve with jasmine rice, scallions, cilantro and lime.

VARIATIONS

Oven-baked thighs. Bake at 425 F (220 C) until the thickest part reaches 165 F (74 C), about 20-25 minutes. Brush with reserved clean marinade for the final 5 minutes.

Grilled chicken. Grill over medium-high heat, turning once, until charred in spots and 165 F (74 C) inside.

Ground chicken. Cook 1 1/2 lb ground chicken with the lemongrass mixture in a skillet, breaking it up; cook to 165 F (74 C) and finish with reserved clean sauce.

Citrus-forward. Add 1 tsp finely grated lime zest to the marinade.

DONENESS & FOOD SAFETY

Use a thermometer at the thickest point; poultry should reach 165 F (74 C). Thighs may be cooked to 175-185 F (79-85 C) for a more tender texture.

Storage: Refrigerate cooked chicken within 2 hours and use within 3-4 days. Store rice separately. Reheat chicken gently in a covered skillet with a spoonful of water until steaming hot. Freeze cooked chicken up to 2 months; thaw in the refrigerator. Do not reuse marinade that contacted raw chicken unless boiled thoroughly.

Images show ingredients, preparation, cooking, finishing and serving stages. Cook chicken to a safe internal temperature; visual cues alone are not enough.