

Beer Brined Chicken

Brining is different than marinating or salt curing a meat/poultry product. Being a liquid high in sodium and sugar, osmosis removes the liquid in the product and replaces it with flavors that hydrate the meat, increases the tenderness by denaturing the proteins and helps preserve the ingredient.

Ingredients:

- 2 Quarts Beer*
- 2 Quarts Water or ice
- 1 Cup Kosher Salt
- 1/2 Cup Sugar
- 4 Each Bay Leaves
- 1 Bunch Thyme, fresh
- 1 Each Yellow Onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 Each Lemon, quartered
- 4 Each Garlic Cloves, peeled and sliced

Directions:

Brine Option 1:

If you have planned ahead, this option will give you more flavors. In a large pot, add beer, salt, sugar, bay leaves, thyme, onion, lemon and garlic. Bring to a simmer for 10 minutes and remove from heat. Add the remaining ice; this will help cool the brine solution. Refrigerate for 1 hour or until brine is well chilled. Use either a large 2 gallon container or 2 gallon Ziplock bag and add the chicken, then top off with the brine. Place in the refrigerator or in an iced cooler for 12-24 hours.

Brine Option 2:

In a large container or 2 gallon size Ziplock bag, add all the ingredients (water instead of ice) except the chicken; mix well. Add the chicken to the bag. Place in the refrigerator or in an iced cooler for 12-24 hours.

Oven Cooking Instructions:

Remove the chicken from the brine, rinse well, pat dry and let rest while the oven is preheating to 475°. Place bird on a roasting rack or large sauté pan and roast until the internal temperature is 160°, about 45 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest for 15 minutes for any carry over temperature (the chicken will continue to cook even outside the oven, do to the high heat) and the juices to re-distribute, before carving.

Smoking Instructions:

Follow either brine option 1 or 2. Instead of using an oven, use a smoker (fire, gas or electric) and cooking using a hot smoke technique, keeping the temperature at 250° until the internal temp of the chicken is 165°. For wood chips, I would recommend Apple, Pecan or Cherry wood chips soaked for 30 minutes in the same beer you used in the brine. These woods give a nice sweet smoke, giving a nice background smokiness instead of overpowering with the flavor of hickory.

*** For Beer, My suggestions are: Oktoberfest, Hefeweizen, Bock, Pale Ale, or Brown Ale. You may use a Stout or Porter if you wish, just cut the brine time to 6 hours or the bird will just taste like a Stout or Porter.**