

TECHNIQUE | PEELING AND MINCING GINGER

Because of its shape, ginger can be difficult to peel and mince. These techniques work best.



1. Use the bowl of a teaspoon to scrape off the knobby skin from a knob of ginger.



2. Slice the peeled ginger into thin rounds, then cut the rounds into thin matchstick-like strips.



3. Chop the matchsticks crosswise into a fine mince.

that had “marinated” and that which was rubbed right before grilling, so I went with the quickest, simplest approach.

Now about that neon red coloring. Recipes typically include turmeric, paprika, and/or saffron. To keep things simple I opted for just turmeric; neither paprika nor saffron had quite the same impact.

My tandoori-style chicken was not quite as colorful as the restaurant variety, but it wasn't dry or tough either. It was moist and tender and had all the full, rich flavors that define tandoori. Now, tandoori chicken has worked its way back onto my list of Indian favorites, as long as I stay at home to eat it.

CHARCOAL-GRILLED TANDOORI-STYLE CHICKEN BREASTS WITH RAITA

SERVES 4

If the chicken flares, move it to the cooler side of the grill. The raita is best made with whole milk yogurt, although low-fat can be used. Do not use nonfat yogurt; the sauce will taste hollow and

bland. Carve the chicken from the bone before serving, if desired.

Raita

- 1 cup whole milk yogurt
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 1 teaspoon)
- Table salt
- Cayenne

Chicken

- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger (see illustrations above)
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- 2 whole bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts, split to make 4 halves (10 to 12 ounces each) (see “Splitting a Chicken Breast,” below)
- Disposable aluminum roasting pan

STEP-BY-STEP | SPLITTING A CHICKEN BREAST

Store-bought split chicken breasts are highly problematic, and we do not recommend that you buy them. Some are so sloppily cut that the tenderloins are missing, some retain only tattered shreds of skin, and some packages contain wildly divergent sizes. You're better off buying whole breasts and splitting them yourself.

The basic method for splitting a chicken breast is to simply push a chef's knife through the skin, flesh, and bone. While this method is straightforward, sometimes the split breasts are lopsided or both lobes are marred by unruly bits of bone and cartilage around which the knife and fork must eventually navigate. Enter a classic technique to split a chicken breast. It involves the removal of the keel bone and the cartilage that divide the

breast, thereby making the chicken easier to eat. This method takes a few minutes, but we think it's time well spent.

Begin by trimming the rib sections off the breast (kitchen shears work particularly well for this task). Then, with the breast turned skin side down, use a knife to score the membrane down the center along the length of the breast. Pick up the breast, and, using both hands, bend back the breast lobes, forcing the keel bone to pop free. Grasp the keel bone and pull it out. (On occasion, the cartilage breaks—if it does, just dig in with your fingers, grip the remaining piece, and pull it out.) Finally, use the knife to halve the breast down the center at the seam, applying force near the top to cut through the wishbone.



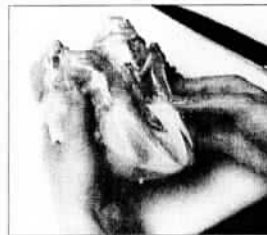
1. Trim rib sections.



2. Score membrane.



3. Pop keel bone free.



4. Pull out keel bone.



5. Halve breast.

1. **FOR RAITA:** Mix yogurt, cilantro, and garlic together in medium bowl. Season with salt and cayenne to taste and refrigerate.

2. **FOR CHICKEN:** Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal (6 quarts, about 100 briquettes) and allow to burn until all charcoal is covered with layer of fine gray ash, about 20 minutes. Build modified two-level fire by spreading coals over half of grill, leaving other half with no coals. Set cooking grate in place, cover with lid, and let grate heat up, about 5 minutes. Use grill brush to scrape grate clean. Grill is ready when coals are hot. (See how to gauge heat level on page 31.)

3. Mix ginger, coriander, cumin, turmeric, cinnamon, salt, and cayenne together in small bowl. Coat both sides of chicken with spice mixture. Cook chicken, uncovered, over hotter part of grill until well browned, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Move chicken, skin side up, to cooler side of grill and cover with aluminum pan; continue to cook for 10 minutes. Turn and continue to cook until instant-read thermometer inserted in thickest part of breast registers 160 degrees; about 5 minutes longer. Transfer to serving platter and serve immediately with raita.

GAS-GRILLED TANDOORI-STYLE CHICKEN BREASTS WITH RAITA

With the lid down on a gas grill, there's no need to cook the chicken under a disposable pan.

Follow recipe for Charcoal-Grilled Tandoori-Style Chicken Breasts through step 1. Turn all burners to high, close lid, and heat grill until very hot, about 15 minutes. Use grill brush to scrape cooking grate clean. Leave one burner on high and turn other burner(s) down to medium-low. Continue with recipe from step 3, cooking with lid down.