

Ingredients for Glazed Baby Back Ribs

3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

1 cup tomato ketchup

2 Tbs. honey

1½ Tbs. Worcestershire sauce

1 Tbs. unsalted butter

¾ tsp. ground ginger

¾ tsp. ground coriander

1 large garlic clove, minced

2 lb. (2 racks) baby back ribs

Browning: Browning meats and vegetables in oil before braising in liquid caramelizes the natural sugars, developing rich surface color and deep flavor. When braising on the grill, you are first browning or grilling the meat, which produces deep flavor and also creates attractive grill marks. Do not skip this step. Resist the temptation to lift pieces up every few seconds, as this interferes with the browning process and can cause the food to lose moisture and stick.

Flambéing Safely: Adding wines and other liquors to braised dishes contributes flavor, but it is important to do this safely. When flambéing, always transfer the liquor from its original bottle to another container before adding the liquid to the pan, as the flame can travel into the bottle and cause it to burst. Remove the pan from the heat when pouring in the liquor, especially if using a gas stove or outdoor grill. Keep pot holders or towels well out of reach of the flames.

Reducing Liquids: An important step in braising is reducing the cooking liquid. This typically involves simmering the liquid briskly for several minutes, reducing its volume, concentrating its flavor and thickening its body. During this process, some of the alcohol content of the wine or spirits will evaporate, eliminating any harsh edge and bringing out the flavor.

A Note About Backyard Braising: In the braising recipes featured here, you will need to adjust the grill temperature during cooking, which is easiest to accomplish on a gas grill.

Glazed Baby Back Ribs

When you serve these delicious ribs, be sure to pass around plenty of paper napkins!

Preheat a grill to medium heat or 350°F. Line a large roasting pan with aluminum foil.

In a saucepan, combine the lemon juice, ketchup, honey, Worcestershire sauce, butter, ginger, coriander and garlic. Set the pan on the grill or on the grill’s side burner over medium heat and bring the ketchup mixture to a boil, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Remove the glaze from the heat.

Put the ribs in the foil-lined roasting pan. Pour the glaze over the ribs, turning the ribs to coat both sides with the glaze. Arrange the ribs meaty side up. Cover the roasting pan tightly with another layer of foil, set the pan on the grill and close the grill lid. Braise for 1 hour.

Remove the roasting pan from the grill. Using tongs, carefully pull back the foil from the pan. Be careful; the foil and steam will be very hot.

Reduce the grill temperature to medium-low heat. Place the ribs on the grill and close the grill lid. Grill until the ribs are nicely browned and the meat is very tender, brushing occasionally with the glaze from the roasting pan.

Transfer the ribs to a carving board and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Cut between the bones to separate the individual ribs. Pile the ribs onto a serving platter and serve immediately. Serves 4 to 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Fun Food*, by Stephanie Rosenbaum (Simon & Schuster, 2006).

Braised Soy-Ginger Chicken and Bok Choy

Other leafy greens, such as Swiss chard, kale or spinach, may be used in place of the bok choy. Chop the leaves coarsely and cook just until tender. The spinach will need to cook for only a few seconds.

Preheat a grill to high heat.

Set a Dutch oven or deep fry pan on the grill. Combine the water, soy sauce, wine, brown sugar, five-spice powder, ginger and green onions in the pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce the grill temperature to medium heat. Submerge the chicken pieces, skin side up, in the liquid and simmer gently for 8 minutes. Turn the pieces over and continue to simmer until the chicken is opaque throughout when tested with the tip of a knife, about 8 minutes more.

Using tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken to a platter and cover with aluminum foil. Bring the braising liquid to a boil, add the bok choy and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer the bok choy to the platter.

Return the braising liquid to a boil and boil until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Stir in the honey and sesame oil. Move the pot to the side of the grill. Place the chicken on the grill, brush with the braising liquid and grill for about 2 minutes per side. Arrange the chicken on top of the bok choy on the platter. Pour any remaining braising liquid over the chicken and bok choy and serve with steamed rice. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, *Asian*, by Farina Wong Kingsley (Oxmoor House, 2007).

Beer-Braised Barbecued Chicken

In our version of barbecued chicken, the chicken is first browned on the grill. Then the meat is slowly braised until tender in a Dutch oven, also on the grill, using a flavorful cooking liquid that combines beer and barbecue sauce. Finally, the chicken is quickly grilled again just before serving to caramelize the sauce. Use only thighs, drumsticks and wings for this recipe; chicken breasts will turn out dry when braised and grilled.

Preheat a grill to medium-high heat.

Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Toss lightly with 3 Tbs of the oil. Arrange the chicken on the grill and brown on all sides, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter.

Set a Dutch oven on the grill and heat until the pot is hot. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the pan along with the onions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the beer and barbecue sauce and bring to a boil. Add the chicken, reduce the grill temperature to low, cover the pot and close the grill lid. Cook until the chicken is tender, about 1 hour. Maintain the liquid in the pan at a slow, steady simmer; depending on your grill, you might need to adjust the heat. Using tongs, transfer the chicken to a baking sheet.

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Ingredients for Braised Soy-Ginger Chicken and Bok Choy

1½ cups water

1 cup soy sauce

¼ cup rice wine or dry sherry

2 Tbs. firmly packed brown sugar

½ tsp. Chinese five-spice powder

2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger

3 green onions, thinly sliced

2 lb. bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs or breast halves

½ lb. bok choy, quartered lengthwise

2 Tbs. honey

1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil

Steamed rice for serving

Ingredients for Beer-Braised Barbecued Chicken

4 lb. chicken thighs, drumsticks and wings

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

4 Tbs. canola oil

2 yellow onions, sliced ¼ inch thick

1¼ cups ale or lager-style beer

2½ cups barbecue sauce