



The Perfect Grilled Boneless Chicken Breast Just in Time for Summer's big kick-off - Memorial Day Weekend Grillin'

We Americans are in love with the boneless, skinless chicken breast --- it's a low-fat protein that's economical, convenient, and lends itself to countless variations of delicious entrees. However, when it comes to grilling the boneless, skinless chicken breast, many times we end up with a charred, dry, tough piece of tasteless meat. So, here's a proven technique of brining and grilling that will result in a juicy, tender, delicious chicken breast ready for any taste variation you can come up with. In fact, I will provide you with several dry rubs and recipe ideas to get you started. First things first.....

The Perfect Grilled Boneless Chicken Breast

8	boneless, skinless chicken breasts (approx. 6 oz. each) trimmed of excess fat, tenderloins removed and reserved for another use (chicken pounded to ½ inch – see below)
½ Cup	Kosher Salt (or ¼ Cup table salt)
½ Cup	Sugar
1 Quart	Cold Water
	Freshly Ground Pepper (or other seasoning)
	Vegetable or Canola Oil

First, there's the shape of the chicken breast: thick at one end, thin at the other. The meat cannot cook evenly. Pounding the breasts to uniform thickness will ensure even cooking and even browning. Most chicken breasts are packaged as halves. If not cut the breasts down the center. Next, remove the tenderloins and keep these for stir-fries, chicken tenders, or grill separately. Pound the breasts to an even thickness, about ½-1 inch. I pound my breasts, usually two at a time, in a large plastic ziplock, not zipping it up. This keeps the raw breasts from contaminating the work surface. Always be careful when handling raw meat of any kind and wash your hands and work area before preparing other foods. After pounding the chicken breasts to an even cutlet, discard the bag used for pounding and place all eight chicken cutlets in a new gallon size ziplock bag. At this point, you can refrigerate the breasts until you are ready to brine them (about ½ hour until grilling time) or continue on.

Secondly, if you watched us at Thanksgiving, you will remember that we brined the turkey, that is, to soak in a saltwater solution, to promote flavor and juiciness. That is what we are going to do with our boneless, skinless chicken cutlets for the same reasons, to promote flavor and juiciness. I again added sugar to the brine, as it not only improved the flavor of the chicken, but also the appearance as the sugar caramelized on the exterior, adding more color.

In a large measuring cup containing one quart of cold water, dissolve ½ cup of kosher salt and ½ cup of sugar. (if using regular table salt, reduce salt to ¼ cup) Pour this solution over the chicken in the ziplock bag, mixing with the chicken; pressing out as much air as possible, seal bag. Refrigerate 30 minutes. (Unlike a large turkey, chicken breasts only need a short time to brine – do not brine overnight – you could end up with mushy chicken breasts – that's no good!)

Thirdly, start your fire. If it is a charcoal fire, your coals will need to burn 20-30 minutes until coated with a light ash for a hot heat, about the time it takes to brine the chicken. Gas grills need to be turned to high, lid closed, and heated until hot, approximately 10-15 minutes. (This half-hour will also give you time to turn on the water for the corn or make your salad or dish up your potato and pasta salads, etc. Make your side dishes easy, as your chicken will steal the show!)

Cooking over a high heat fire provides a good sear, cooks quickly -- charcoal fire 2-3 minutes per side and the gas grill fire 3-4 minutes per side for a ½ inch thick chicken cutlet, and the chicken stays juicy and tender.

Before grilling, remove the chicken breasts from the brine, dry thoroughly, patting with paper towels, and sprinkle with freshly ground pepper, lemon pepper, o cajun seasoning or one of the delicious dry rub recipes below. When grill is ready, lightly brush both sides of chicken breasts with vegetable oil. Grill uncovered until light brown, about 3 minutes over charcoal high heat or 4 minutes over gas high heat on each side.



Depending on how you are serving or seasoning your breasts, after you turn the chicken breast, you can also baste your unseasoned chicken breasts with your favorite barbecue sauce. Here is when your versatility of tastes comes in.

Now, for some flavor:

Dry Rubs are not only easy to make, but stored in an airtight container, they can be used all summer to season chicken, meats, fish, and vegetables.

If you don't have time to make the spice rubs, you can pick from an array of wonderful Cajun seasoning, fajita seasoning, Herbes de Provence, and the new Montreal meat seasonings --- all found, of course, at Jungle Jim's International Market --- naturally, for all your Memorial Day grilling needs!

Here are some recipes and combinations you can try:

Lemon Herb Rub

- 1 Tsp. garlic salt
- 3-4 Tabs. Dried Herbs of choice, crushed
These could be Herbes de Provence or a combination
Of dried Sweet basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme, parsley, etc.
- 2 Tsp. Lemon pepper

Combine. Keep in an airtight container.

Tuscan Rub

- 1 Tsp. Garlic Powder
- 3 Tabs. Sun-dried Tomatoes (not in oil), finely minced
- 2 Tabs. Dried Rosemary
- 2 Tabs. Dried Sweet Basil
- 1 Tab. Dried Oregano
- 1 Tsp. Fennel seeds (optional)
- ½ Teas. Kosher Salt
- ¼ Teas. Freshly Ground Pepper

Combine. Store in an airtight container

Cajun Spice Rub

- 2 Tabs. Sweet Paprika
- 1 Tabs. Ground Cumin
- 1 Tabs. Dried Thyme
- 1 Tabs. Dried Oregano
- 1 Tabs. Onion Powder
- 1 Tabs. Garlic Powder
- 1 Teas. Black Pepper
- 1 Teas. Cayenne Pepper or to taste

Combine. Store in an airtight container.

Mexican Rub

- 2 Tabs. Chili Powder
- ½ Tsp. Garlic powder
- 1 Tabs. Paprika
- 1 Teas. Ground Cumin



1 Teas.	Dried Oregano, crushed
½ Teas.	Cayenne Pepper or to taste
½ Teas.	Ground Cinnamon
½ Teas.	Salt

Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

Deep South Rub

1 Tab.	Onion Powder
1 Tab.	Garlic Powder
1 Tab.	Dry Mustard
1 Tab.	Dried Bay leaves, crushed
3 Tab.	Sweet Paprika
½ Teas.	Kosher Salt
¼ Teas.	Pepper

Combine ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

I am sure you get the idea. Use your imagination to come up with your own flavor combinations. You're still going to end up with moist, succulent, flavorful chicken and have a lot of fun with your family and friends.

Visit Jungle Jim's and add some fresh fruit, like a watermelon, blueberry, and star fruit salad, add some home grown corn-on-the-cob, pasta salad, potato salad, rice or rice salad – your family's favorites and many some new ones – Jungle has an unbelievable Deli section and Olive Bar and over a mile of fresh produce.

Now that you have mastered the art of well-seasoned, juicy, tender grilled chicken breasts, it's show time! And since you want to sit back and enjoy this holiday dinner, here are some quick and simple menus to showcase your chicken breasts.

The All-American:

After turning your chicken breasts, baste with your family's favorite barbecue sauce, serving extra sauce on the side. Serve with summer's sweet silver queen corn on the cob and potato salad you can make yourself or pick up at Jungle Jim's Deli. Don't forget ripe, red watermelon wedges to top it off. Add any of your favorite dishes – you can't go wrong here!

The Italiano:

After turning your chicken breasts (you could season lightly with Tuscan Rub), spread on a thin layer of refrigerated Pesto sauce (found in the Italian refrigerator section at Jungle Jim's) and top with thin slices of provolone or mozzarella cheese; after taking from the grill, top each breast with a couple slices of garden fresh or roma tomatoes – fantastic! Serve with your favorite pasta salad – one from the many choices at the Deli – or create your own with tortellini and veggies of choice. Or try an antipasta salad! Serve with thick slices of grilled garlic bread.

The Classic Salad:

Taking from the brine and after patting the chicken dry, sprinkle with Lemon Herb Rub, brush lightly with oil and grill according to the directions. Make up your own caesar salad or use one of the packaged caesar salad packages in the produce department. Top the caesar salad with slices of the grilled lemon herb chicken and add shaved slices of Parmigiano Reggiano. Served with grilled bread topped with a bruschetta mixture of chopped, fresh tomatoes, garlic, and fresh cut basil. Magnificent!

Pair Cajun side dishes with the Cajun Rub, Mexican with Mexican Rub and so.....you get the idea --- just have fun! As you can see, your menu variations are endless, but your chicken will be perfect every time.

Have a wonderful Memorial Day Weekend
and Good Grillin'!!

Jungle Jim's Margie Potts