



## CHINESE CHICKEN RICE (SIMPLIFIED WEEKNIGHT)

*Serves 4*

### INGREDIENTS

*For the Poached Chicken:*

8-10 bone-in skin-on chicken thighs (~2.5 lb)(see recipe note 1)

4 scallions, cut in half

4 garlic cloves, smashed with the side of a knife

2" knob of ginger, sliced (~35g) (no need to peel)

1 medium onion, rough chopped into 4 pieces

6 C water or enough to just cover the chicken in the pot

1½ tsp kosher salt

*For the Scallion Ginger Sauce:*

2 tbsp grated or very finely minced ginger

2 small garlic cloves, grated or very finely minced

1 bunch scallions, sliced thinly

1-2 tsp salt, or to taste

2/3 C neutral high heat oil (I use avocado oil), or enough to completely wilt down scallions

*For the Rice:*

2 C jasmine rice

1 tbsp grated or very finely minced ginger

2 cloves of garlic, minced

2 C poaching liquid, from above (see note 4)

*To serve:*



Scallion ginger sauce (from above)

Sriracha (or similar)

Cucumber and/or tomato slices, cilantro, etc.

## METHOD

**Prep aromatics:** There is quite a lot of ginger, garlic and scallion used in this recipe. The fastest way to go about it is to prep those items in parallel. Begin by setting out the following 3 vessels:

- a large pot for the poaching the chicken pieces,
- a small prep bowl for the aromatics that will flavour the rice, and
- a medium heatproof bowl for the scallion-ginger sauce

Prep the respective amounts of ginger, scallion and garlic for each of the 3 vessels in accordance with the instructions in the “Ingredients” section above.

**Wash rice:** Wash rice in cool tap water, draining several times and rinsing with fresh water until water is less opaque but does not need to run clear. Drain well in fine-mesh colander (ensure weave is small enough the grains won't fall through).

**Poach chicken:** Add remaining poaching ingredients including the chicken into the large poaching pot holding the prepped aromatics. Add the water but adjust (depending on pot size) to cover the chicken by about 1”. Cover and bring to rolling boil. Skim the scum. Cover and quickly bring back to vigorous boil then immediately lower the heat to a gentle simmer (small bubbles) and cook for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, remove pot from the heat completely *without removing the lid*. Allow to stand undisturbed for 25-30 minutes or until the temperature of the thickest part is 165f. Exact length of time to cook will depend on the size of your chicken pieces and to some extent how well your pot retains heat. E.g. the bone-in/skin on chicken thighs I buy weigh ~120g each and take 25 minutes to poach off-heat. Cook longer as needed for large pieces. [**TIP:** If you want more precision, insert a meat thermometer - the kind where the needle is attached to a digital unit via wire that hangs out of the oven or pot - into the thickest part of one chicken piece to get visibility on the progress].

[If you have reserved poaching liquid from a previous meal, you can cook the rice now instead of waiting for the chicken to finish poaching - see Recipe Note 4]



Once chicken is cooked through, remove pieces from the pot, either directly onto a cutting board or if you don't mind the extra step, into an ice bath to firm up the skin if you plan to eat it – see Recipe Note 3. I typically pull off the skin for serving so I skip ice bath. Skim any remaining scum from the broth.

**Cook rice (once chicken is done poaching):** Heat a medium-sized pot over medium heat. Add a drizzle of oil (or chicken fat) and sauté the minced ginger and garlic for 10 seconds, stirring. Turn off heat (but keep on stove for residual heat) and add drained rice, stirring gently to coat the grains with the flavourful oil. Be gentle so as not to break the rice grains. Add 2C of the poaching liquid into the pot. Cover. Bring to a boil, immediately reduce heat to the lowest setting and cook undisturbed (covered) for 20 minutes. Remove from heat. Fluff and keep covered until ready to serve.

**While the chicken is poaching / rice is cooking . . .**

**Finish the scallion ginger sauce:** Heat the oil in a small pot until it is hot and starts popping. To test readiness, insert a dry wooden chopstick or utensil into the oil. If bubbles are rapidly rising up the sides, oil is ready. Carefully pour hot oil all over the prepped minced scallion mixture while stirring to distribute well. It should sizzle and pop. You may be able to hold back 1-2 tbsp of the oil even though it may not look like enough oil at first but the heat wilts the mixture way down. Do a final taste for saltiness and add more salt as needed – the sauce should taste quite salty. Mix well and set aside.

**Prep veggie sides:** Slice cucumbers, tomatoes, pick cilantro, etc.

**Reserve extra poaching liquid:** You can either serve the remaining poaching liquid as a broth alongside the meal as is customary to do OR save it for next time you make this meal so you can poach the chicken and cook the rice in parallel, rather than sequentially as is required the first time. Highly recommend! See Recipe Note 4.

**To serve (this is how I do it):** Pull off skin and discard, then pull off large pieces of chicken meat off the bone (I do this because of kids). Serve chicken pieces on top of rice, copious amounts of scallion sauce and veggie sides. Enjoy!



## RECIPE NOTES - WEEKNIGHT SHORTCUTS VERSUS TRADITIONAL PREPARATION:

1. **USE CHICKEN PIECES INSTEAD OF WHOLE CHICKEN:** First and foremost, the easiest shortcut is to use chicken pieces rather than the whole chicken. Not everyone has the time nor the tenacity to cook and dismantle a whole chicken on any given day - much less on a busy weeknight. Chicken pieces poach much faster, with the added bonus you can select breast and/or leg pieces based on individual preferences of the people you are feeding. By the way, do try to use the best quality chicken you can for this recipe since it is prepared so simply.
2. **MAKE JUST THE ONE SAUCE, THE GINGER SCALLION SAUCE:** Second, I don't make the red chili sauce and sweet dark soy sauce. I won't deny those are spectacular. But as a busy mama hustling dinner for the fam, imma go ahead and reach for that bottle of sriracha instead. First, who doesn't love sriracha? Second, I honestly think the ginger-scallion sauce is the crowning jewel here, anyway.
3. **SKIP ICE BATH:** This IS sacrilege as far as the tradition of Hainan Chicken Rice. After poaching, the chicken is normally submerged in ice bath to stop the cooking and tighten the skin, yielding perfectly taunt and bouncy skin. How good the skin is is one testament to how well the dish is prepared. As much as I revere taunt and bouncy skin, I don't feel compelled to eat the chicken skin, particularly if it means dropping the extra step of the ice bath not to mention the associated clean up. Note: I keep the skin ON to poach, then remove it before serving. Ultimately, I'll leave this SKIN/ICE BATH choice up to you! If you decide to keep the skin, consider also cleaning/smoothing the chicken skin with a coarse salt rub (as if exfoliating it) before poaching. This is an essential step in the traditional method.
4. **SAVE / FREEZE EXTRA POACHING LIQUID FOR NEXT TIME:** Obviously this shortcut applies to subsequent times you make this, because you will 😊 Once you've read the full recipe, you'll notice the linear process whereby you poach the chicken first, then use the poaching liquid to cook the rice. There is typically more poaching liquid than needed i.e. 6C poaching liquid versus 2C required to cook rice, which means there is plenty of excess broth that can be saved and sipped too. The exact amount may vary depending on (a) evaporation and (b) shape and size of pot but you can top up with plain water to make up the 2C needed for rice - the difference is not noticeable. All this so the next time you make this meal, poach the chicken and cook the rice in parallel. In other words, the minute you've dropped your chicken into the water to poach, you can immediately use the defrosted broth (saved from last time) to cook rice. This **shaves off 30+ minutes (or more)** which is major time-savings in weeknight time!