

Chicken Biryani

Serves 4 to 6 · 2 hr (plus marinating) · Layered rice, spice and slow steam



Photo: Hyderabad chicken biryani: Dheerajk88, CC BY-SA 4.0 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chicken_Hyderabad_Biryani.JPG)

Ingredients

- 2 lb (900 g) bone-in chicken pieces
- 1 cup plain yogurt (245 g)
- 1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 1/2 tsp Kashmiri chili powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp garam masala
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 cups basmati rice (400 g), rinsed and soaked 30 minutes
- Whole spices: 4 green cardamom pods, 4 cloves, 1 bay leaf, 1 small cinnamon stick
- 3 large onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup neutral oil (120 ml) for frying, plus 2 tbsp ghee
- 1 handful each mint and cilantro leaves
- 1 pinch saffron soaked in 3 tbsp warm milk
- Salt

Method

- 1 Mix the chicken with the yogurt, ginger-garlic paste, chili powder, turmeric, garam masala, lemon juice and 1 1/2 tsp salt. Marinate at least 2 hours, or overnight in the fridge.
- 2 Fry the onions in the oil over medium heat, stirring, for 15 to 20 minutes until deep golden. Lift out and drain. Keep 2 tbsp of the onion oil.
- 3 Boil a large pot of well-salted water with the whole spices. Add the drained rice and cook 5 to 6 minutes until about 70 percent done, firm in the center. Drain.
- 4 In a heavy pot, add the onion oil and the chicken with its marinade. Top with half the fried onions and half the herbs.
- 5 Spread the rice evenly over the chicken. Scatter on the remaining onions and herbs, drizzle with the saffron milk and dot with ghee.
- 6 Seal the pot tightly with foil and the lid. Cook on medium heat for 10 minutes, then on the lowest heat for 35 to 40 minutes. A heat diffuser helps prevent scorching.

- 7 Check that the chicken is cooked through, with no pink at the bone (165 F / 74 C); if not, reseal and cook 10 minutes more. Rest 10 minutes off the heat, then open and serve, scooping from the bottom so every plate gets chicken and rice.

More on this dish, its history and the full photo credits: <https://intercontinentalchef.com/chicken-biryani/>