

General Tso's Chicken

Start to finish: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Servings: 6

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chicken stock
1/3 cup mirin
1/2 cup teaspoons seasoned rice vinegar
1/3 cup sweet soy sauce*
1/2 cup dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon sambal oelek chili paste (or more, to taste)
3/4 cup sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch
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1 tablespoon canola oil for frying
6-12 cloves garlic (to taste), minced
1 inch ginger root, minced**
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1 pound sliced carrots
2 pounds broccoli florets
--
2-4 tablespoons canola oil for frying
2 pounds chicken breast cut into 1-inch cubes
Sesame seeds (optional)
Minced chili pepper (optional)

* You can substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ soy sauce + $\frac{3}{8}$ cup brown sugar. Add 1-2 teaspoons molasses for greater depth of flavor.

** Pro tip: freeze your ginger root and grate with the fine side of a cheese grater for faster prep.

Prepare the sauce: In a medium bowl (preferably with a pour spout), combine the stock, mirin, rice vinegar, sweet and dark soy sauces, chili paste, sugar and cornstarch and set aside.

In a two-quart saucepan over medium heat, add one tablespoon oil. When the oil begins to shimmer, reduce heat to medium-low and add the garlic and ginger. Cook for 1-2 minutes until fragrant and vegetables are slightly soft.

Stir in the sauce mixture and increase heat to medium-high. Bring the sauce to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium, stirring frequently until the sauce thickens. You will see dark bits rise to the top. This is the cornstarch thickening. Just keep stirring.

In a small bowl, strain out the garlic and ginger and cool the sauce. The sauce can be prepared in advance and refrigerated for up to three days. Set aside.

Prepare the vegetables: In a large microwave-proof bowl, add 3-4 tablespoons of water to the carrots and broccoli and cover with a plate. Microwave on high for 3-5 minutes. The vegetables should be crisp. Run under cold water to stop cooking. Set aside.

Prepare the chicken: In a large frying pan over medium-high heat, add the oil. When the oil begins to shimmer, start adding the chicken. Cook, stirring every 3-4 minutes, until it begins to brown on all sides, about 15 minutes. Don't crowd the pan.

Line a large heat-proof bowl with several layers of paper towels for draining. With a slotted spoon, remove the chicken from the pan and place in the bowl. Keep warm. Repeat with the remaining chicken, adding more oil if necessary. Wipe out the frying pan.

Reheat and assemble: In the same pan over medium heat, add the cooked vegetables and as much sauce as you'd like (approximately 1 ½ to 2 cups). Cook until warmed through, then add the chicken and additional sauce, if desired.

Serving: Serve hot over rice. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and chili pepper if desired.

(Adapted from Dining Services at Mount Holyoke College)

