

Sheet-Pan Chicken With Jammy Tomatoes and Pancetta

By Melissa Clark

YIELD 4 servings

TIME 45 minutes

In this relatively speedy sheet-pan dinner, boneless, skinless chicken thighs are seasoned with a savory, cumin-scented spice mix and roasted with whole garlic cloves and cherry tomatoes, which turn soft and sweet in the oven's heat. If you have ripe summer cherry tomatoes, you can skip the brown sugar. If you'd rather use boneless chicken breasts, reduce the cooking time by about 5 to 7 minutes. This makes a light meal on its own, but you can add rice or crusty bread, and maybe a salad, if you need something more substantial.

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed
9 whole unpeeled garlic cloves
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
1 ½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice, plus more for serving
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon brown sugar (optional)
¾ teaspoon ground cumin
1 pint cherry tomatoes (preferably different colors), halved
2 ounces diced pancetta or bacon
¼ cup torn fresh dill, parsley or other herbs, for serving
Freshly ground black pepper

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat oven to 425 degrees. Season chicken all over with salt, and place on a rimmed baking sheet.

Step 2

Smash all the garlic cloves with the side of a knife and peel them. Finely grate one garlic clove and put it in a small bowl. Stir in the 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice, paprika, oregano, brown sugar (if using) and cumin. Pour over chicken, tossing to coat.

Step 3

Add tomatoes and remaining smashed, peeled garlic cloves to baking sheet, spreading them out around the chicken. Season tomatoes lightly with salt and drizzle with a little more olive oil. Scatter pancetta on top.

Step 4

Roast until chicken is golden and cooked through, about 30 to 35 minutes. After 15 minutes, stir the tomatoes and pancetta, but don't disturb the chicken.

Step 5

Transfer chicken to plates. Stir the tomatoes and pancetta around in the pan, scraping up all the delicious browned bits from the bottom and sides, and stir in the herbs and black pepper to taste. Taste and add salt, if needed, and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice, if you like. Spoon tomatoes, garlic and pancetta over the chicken to serve.