

# DESTINATION ASIA

## Hainanese Chicken Rice

The first chicken rice restaurants opened in Singapore during Japanese occupation in World War II, when the British were forced out and their Hainanese servants lost their source of income. The dish was born out of frugality, created by servant-class immigrants trying to stretch the flavour of the chicken. Now, Hainanese chicken rice is considered one of Singapore's national dishes and is eaten "everywhere, every day".

**Preparation time** 1 Hour      **Cooking time** 1 Hour 30 Minutes      **Serves** 6 people

### Ingredients

#### Hainanese chicken

- 1 whole chicken (giblets removed)
- ¼ cup kosher salt
- 4 pieces of fresh ginger, peeled and cut into ¼-inch (6 mm) slices
- 1 bunch of fresh scallions
- 3.7 litres cold water
- 2 tbsp sesame oil

#### Hainanese rice

- ¼ cup sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons chicken fat, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups long grain rice, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups reserved chicken poaching broth

### Steps

1. To clean the chicken, rub thoroughly with kosher salt. Rinse the chicken and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Remove any excess fat from the chicken and set aside for later.
3. Season chicken generously with salt. Stuff the chicken cavity with the ginger slices and scallions.
4. Place the chicken in a large stock pot, cover with cold water by 1 in (2 cm), and season with salt to taste.
5. Bring to a boil over high heat, then immediately reduce the heat to low to maintain a simmer. Cover and cook for 30 minutes or until the internal temperature of the chicken reaches 165°F (75°C). Remove the pot from the heat.
6. Remove chicken from the pot, reserving the poaching liquid for later, and transfer to an ice bath for 5 minutes. Discard the ginger and scallions.
7. Once cooled, pat chicken dry with paper towels and rub with sesame oil.
8. In a large wok or skillet, heat ¼ cup of sesame oil over medium-high heat. Add 2 tbsp of reserved chopped chicken fat, garlic, ginger, and salt, and fry for 10 minutes or until aromatic.
9. Reserve one quarter of the fried garlic mixture, then add rice to the remaining fried garlic and stir to coat. Cook for 3 minutes.
10. Transfer rice to a rice cooker and add 2 cups of reserved poaching broth. Steam the rice for 60 minutes, or until tender.
11. While rice is cooking, carve the chicken for serving.
12. Once cooked, top with sliced chicken, dipping sauces, sliced cucumbers, and fresh cilantro.

**Notes / Tips** Best served with ginger garlic sauce and dark soy sauce.

*A recipe from Destination Asia Singapore*

