

BEER-CAN CHICKEN

(a.k.a. Chicken on a Throne, Drunken Chicken...)

As hastily described in an e-mail to my sister:

Buy 3 3.5-4 pound whole chickens.

Make up a spicy "rub" (sugar, salt, pepper, hot pepper, chili powder, whatever you like with your chix). Wash out the chix and rub the rub into them, inside and out.

On my Weber, I have the ability to put a drip pan in the middle and have coals all around it - this is called "indirect cooking". I start up a big chimney full of briquettes. While this is getting hot, I use 3 soda cans (I don't buy canned beer. No, the paint doesn't seem to come off.) Punch an extra hole or two in the top of the can, add some of the spice rub powder to each can, and spilt a bottle of beer between the three cans.

Squat the chicken down on top of each can on top of a good sized tray, using the legs as a tripod with the can, so it stays (mostly) balanced. When the coals in the chimney are hot (about 30 minutes), I lift it out of my grill and and put the (dry) drip pan in the middle and spread the (red-hot) coals from the chimney around it. I line the chickens up over the drip pan in the middle of the grill, throw a few pieces of hickory down the handle openings on the grill surface and put on the lid (carefully, so you don't knock the birds over). 90 minutes later you have gorgeous chicken...

Pulling the chickens off the cans is a bit tricky. I let them fall over into a big bowl and drain the contents back into the inside of the chicken and out into the bowl. Then the can can be pulled out of the chicken. Definitely GOOD eating and keeps pretty well.

The New York Times described it this way:

BEER-CAN CHICKEN

Time: 1 3/4 hours

2 cups hickory or oak chips, soaked in beer or water to cover for 1 hour and then drained

2 12-ounce cans beer

1/2 cup of your favorite barbecue rub

2 3-1/2- to 4-pound chickens, fat removed, washed and blotted dry.

1. Place wood chips in bowl. Pop tab of each beer can, and make 2 additional holes in each top, using a church-key opener. Pour half the beer from each can over the chips. Add additional beer or water to cover chips, soak them for 1 hour, and drain.
2. Set up grill for indirect grilling.
3. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon barbecue rub in neck cavity and 2 teaspoons in main cavity of each chicken. Add 1 tablespoon rub to each open half-full can of beer.

(Don't worry if it foams up.) Season outside of each bird with two tablespoons of rub.

4. Stand beer cans on work surface. Holding each chicken upright, lower it over can so that can goes into main cavity. Pull chicken legs forward to form a sort of tripod: the chicken should sit upright over can. Carefully transfer chickens to grill in this position, placing them in center over drip pan, away from heat.

5 If using charcoal, toss half the wood chips on each mound of coals. If using gas; place chips in smoker box. Barbecue chickens until nicely browned and cooked through, about 1 1/2 hours, keeping temperature about 350 degrees. (If using charcoal, replenish coals as needed.) The internal temperature of the birds (taken in thickest part of thigh) should be at least 165 degrees.

6. Carefully transfer birds to platter in same position. To carve, lift bird off can and discard can.

Before:



After:

