

Perfect piri piri chicken

Serve with chips and lemon wedges if you want to go Portuguese, though it's also very nice indeed with rice to soak up the extra sauce. Or, in Mendes's style, freshly fried potato crisps – I have it on reliable authority that a bag from the supermarket also does the trick.

Prep **15 min, plus marinating**

Cook **40 min**

Serves **4**

4 chicken legs (thigh and drumstick), skin on, bone in

For the marinade

Juice of ½ lemon

4 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed

2 tsp flaky salt

For the piri piri sauce

2-4 red African or Thai bird's eye chillies, to taste

2 plump garlic cloves, peeled

Juice of 1 lemon

1½ tsp flaky salt

2 tsp sweet smoked paprika

50ml olive oil

1 tbsp port or 1 tsp brown sugar (optional)



Whisk together the lemon juice and garlic for the marinade. Put the chicken in a roasting tin just big enough to hold it, and pour the garlicky juice all over it, turning to ensure it's well coated. Sprinkle with the salt, cover and leave at room temperature (unless it's a very hot day) for an hour.



Meanwhile, roughly chop two chillies (gloves are advisable) and the garlic, add the lemon juice and salt, and whizz to a puree (or mash well in a mortar). Whisk in the paprika and oil. Taste, adding more chilli if you think it needs it, and the port or sugar if you'd prefer it a bit sweeter.



Alternatively, heat the oven to 200C/390F/gas 6 and roast the chicken for about 35 minutes, until cooked through, basting with its juices occasionally. Heat a griddle pan to medium hot, brush the chicken with piri piri, and grill for a few minutes on each side, until just starting to char.

Either way, serve hot with the extra sauce on the side.

- Piri piri chicken: do you prefer the Portuguese version or the African originals – and does Nando's make a decent fist of it? If not, where else would you recommend? And piri piri prawns are delicious – but what else is delicious with this fiery sauce?