

Rick Stein's Hainanese Chicken Rice

(*Khao man gai*)

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Rick Stein says: “This chicken rice, like babi guling, the slow-roasted pig from Bali, is a dish I would cross continents for. It appears in various forms all over the Far East, especially Malaysia and Singapore. There are people who wouldn't let a day go by without a plate of chicken rice, and I can perfectly understand why. It's the moistness of the chicken that gets to you; that and the texture of the rice, made silky by first being fried in some of the chicken fat from the cavity of the bird.”

This recipe is taken from Rick Stein's book – *Far Eastern Odyssey*

Ingredients:

1 x 1.5kg free-range chicken
Freshly ground white pepper
25g peeled ginger, thickly sliced
15g garlic cloves
6 spring onions, trimmed
Ginger and chilli dipping sauce
½ cucumber, peeled, halved lengthways and sliced
Handful of roughly chopped fresh coriander
For the rice:
1 tbsp vegetable oil
350g Thai jasmine rice, rinsed
1 tsp sesame oil
1 pandan leaf, tied into a knot (optional)



Method:

1. Remove the fat from the cavity of the chicken and set aside. Season the chicken inside and out with salt and white pepper. Lightly bruise the ginger, garlic and 4 of the spring onions with a rolling pin and push inside the cavity. Set aside for 1 hour.
2. Bring 4–5 litres of water (enough to cover the chicken) to the boil in a large, deep pan in which the chicken will fit snugly. If the pan is too large, the amount of water needed to cover the bird will produce a watery stock. Immerse the chicken in the water, bring almost back to the boil and leave to simmer very gently for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, cover and leave for 30 minutes, then remove the chicken, cover and set it aside. Skim the fat from the stock and boil until reduced to 1.2 litres.
3. For the rice, heat the vegetable oil in a medium-sized pan over a medium heat. Add the reserved chicken fat and leave for 2–3 minutes until melted. Remove from the heat, and lift out and discard any bits. You should be left with about 3 tablespoons fat. Return to a medium heat, add the rice and stir-fry for a couple of minutes to coat the grains. Add 600ml of the hot chicken stock and bring back to the boil. Add the sesame oil and half teaspoon salt. Stir once, add the pandan leaf if using, cover, lower

the heat and leave to cook for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave to sit, still covered, for 10 more minutes, while you remove the chicken from the bones and cut it up into small pieces. Halve the remaining spring onions and thinly shred them lengthways.

4. Divide the ginger and chilli sauce between dipping bowls.
5. Spoon some of the cooked rice onto each plate, top with the cooked chicken and garnish with the cucumber. Reheat the remaining chicken stock and season to taste. Ladle into small soup bowls and sprinkle in the coriander and the shredded spring onion. Place a plate of chicken rice, dipping sauce and a bowl of soup in front of each person, and tuck in.