

Grilled Cornish Hens with Z'houg

Recipe adapted from Scott Snyder, Levant, Portland, OR

Yield: 4 servings (with leftover z'houg)

Prep Time: 10 minutes (plus 8 hours marinating)

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 8 hours, 50 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 Cornish hens, halved (or 3 to 3½ pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs, legs or breasts)

1 teaspoon [cumin seeds](#)

1 teaspoon coriander seeds

½ teaspoon caraway seeds

1½ packed cups chopped cilantro

1½ packed cups chopped flat-leaf parsley

3 to 5 serrano chiles (depending on how spicy you want your *z'houg*), stemmed and roughly chopped

5 medium garlic cloves, roughly chopped

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided

½ cup [extra-virgin olive oil](#)



DIRECTIONS

1. In a large, airtight container or a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, set the Cornish hen halves (or chicken pieces).

2. To a small skillet set over medium-low heat, add the cumin, coriander and caraway seeds and toast until fragrant, shaking the pan often, about 1 minute. Transfer the spices to a medium plate, cool, then pulverize the seeds in a clean coffee or spice grinder.

3. To a food processor, add the ground spice mixture, the cilantro, parsley, serranos, garlic, black pepper and 1 teaspoon of the salt. Pulse until the mixture is coarse, about 10 one-second pulses. Slowly add the extra-virgin olive oil while pulsing the mixture until it forms a coarse paste, 15 to 20 one-second pulses. Transfer the *z'houg* to an airtight container.

4. Rub the hen halves with the remaining 1 teaspoon of salt, then rub them all over with ¼ cup of the *z'houg* total--about 1 tablespoon of the *z'houg* per hen half (save the rest of the *z'houg* for serving or for another time). Cover the container and refrigerate overnight.

5. Wrap a brick or the bottom of a heavy-bottomed saucepan or skillet with aluminum foil and set aside. Heat a grill pan over medium-high heat for 2 minutes, then add the hen halves to the pan, skin side down. Set the foil-wrapped brick or pot on top of the hens to weigh them down, then cook until the skin is nicely browned, about 25 minutes. Remove the weight and use a metal spatula to flip the hen halves over. Set the weight back on top of the hens and cook until the juices at the leg/thigh joint run clear, 10 to 12 minutes longer. Transfer the hens to a large platter and let them rest for 10 minutes before serving with more *z'houg* to taste.