

Spicy Grilled Chicken Florentine

In Italy most people go to the market every day and make their dinner decision based on what's available that day. While I don't go to the market every day I will often decide on what I'm going to make for dinner based on the ingredients that I have on hand. This day I had boneless chicken breasts, a bag of fresh spinach and the weather was perfect for grilling. The dish I came up with combined spicy grilled chicken with a base of creamy spinach and garlic. The contrast of the spicy chicken and the creamy spinach balance each other to please the pallet in an unexpected way that blends into punch of flavor.

Ingredients

- 4 Thin Sliced Boneless Chicken Breasts
- 4 TBS Italian Grilling Rub (see below)
- Canola Oil for the grill
- 1 medium Onion (diced)
- 1 TBS Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 cloves Garlic (minced finely)
- 1 dry pint Grape Tomatoes (washed)
- 12 oz Bag Baby Spinach (washed & drained)
- ¼ tsp Kosher Salt
- 2 grinds Black Pepper
- 1 oz Mascarpone Cheese (or Cream Cheese)

Grilling Rub Ingredients (makes 4 TBS)

This grilling rub is a cross between an Italian and a Mexican grilling rub. It's spicy and can be used to grill everything from chicken to pork to zucchini. I usually make large batched and keep it in a sealed container in my pantry so that I always have it on hand.

- 1 TBS Kosher Salt (do not substitute table salt)
- 1 TBS Brown Sugar
- 2 tsp Ground Black Pepper
- 2 tsp Garlic Powder
- 1 tsp Chile Powder
- 1 tsp Dried Oregano



In a medium bowl mix the ingredients for the grilling rub.

You want the chicken to be thinly sliced so that you get a balance of chicken and spinach in every bite. You can buy it thinly sliced in the grocery store or you can split the chicken yourself if you have a sharp knife – be very careful if you split it yourself.

Pat the chicken dry with a paper towel. Sprinkle 1 TBS of the Italian Grilling Rub on both sides of each piece of chicken. Place them on a plate and cover with plastic wrap. Place them in the refrigerator for at least 20 minutes prior to grilling.

Preheat your grill to medium high (350°). While the grill is heating prepare all of the remaining ingredients for the Florentine.

In a large frying pan heat the olive oil over *medium* heat. Add one piece of diced onion. When it begins to sizzle in the pan add the diced onion, stirring frequently.

Dip a piece of paper towel folded up in a small amount of canola oil and, using long tongs, oil the grill. Place the chicken on the grill and cook them until they reach an internal temperature of 160°F. Remove the chicken to a plate covered with aluminum foil while you finish the Florentine.

While the chicken is grilling you can finish the Florentine. Continue to cook the onions until they are translucent. Add the minced garlic and continue to cook for thirty seconds. Add the grape tomatoes, salt and pepper. Continue to stir until the tomatoes start to burst. Add the spinach to the frying pan. This may have to be done in stages based on the size of your frying pan. If you can't put it all in the pan at one time, place half of it in the pan and mix it with the tomatoes. Cook it until it begins to wilt down then add the remaining spinach. Cook until the spinach has wilted but has not turned to mush (see photo below). Remove from the heat and add the mascarpone cheese. Stir until the cheese has melted and is incorporated into the Florentine.

Place ¼ of the spinach Florentine on each plate and top with a piece of grilled chicken.



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