

3-for-1 White Meat Delight

By Tom Dickson | Preparation times vary | Cooking times vary



My wife and I become especially budget conscious this time of year. As the holidays approach, we pinch pennies to pay for gifts, extra travel, and special meals. In the spirit of holiday-season economizing, I'm providing a multi-recipe special: three speedy, delicious recipes I've discovered recently that work great for the breast meat of blue grouse or pheasant, or, for those who don't hunt upland birds, free-range chicken. (Free-range birds cost a bit more than caged chickens, but I think they taste better.)

The Korean Barbecue recipe derives from one by Food Network star Bobby Flay. The idea of using pickle juice to brine and flavor meat is from southernliving.com, while the rub comes straight from *Cook's Illustrated*. Marsala and Mushrooms is based on a recipe featured on the *New York Times* cooking site.



All three recipes are devised for 1 ½ to 2 pounds of white meat.

As regular readers of this column may expect, these recipes require buying some out-of-the-ordinary ingredients. But that's what it takes to create out-of-the-ordinary dishes with extraordinary flavors. All the

ingredients can be found in major Montana urban grocers, rural Albertsons stores, or Walmart Supercenters.

Some readers may question smothering the unique taste of game birds with exotic spices and flavorings. To some extent, I agree. If you have just one or two grouse or pheasants, by all means savor their wild essence by sautéing the breasts in butter and serving plain with salt and pepper. But if you have several birds in the freezer, or are using chicken, it's fun to occasionally enliven the meat with new ingredients.



Happy Holidays! 🐘

—Tom Dickson is editor of Montana Outdoors.

Note: If using chicken, double all cooking times.

KOREAN BARBECUE BREASTS

Heat grill. Whisk 1 c. low-sodium soy sauce, 3 T. rice vinegar, 2 T. honey, 1 ½ t. gochujang (Korean fermented chili paste), 2 T. grated fresh ginger (or 1 t. powdered), 6 chopped garlic cloves, 2 t. toasted sesame oil, ½ t. black pepper, and 1 ½ t. toasted sesame seeds in a bowl. Add half to a large baking dish, cover and let meat marinate in the refrigerator 2–8 hours.

Remove breasts from marinade and put on a hot grill, skin side down. Grill 5 minutes until skin is golden brown and crisp. Relocate meat to an indirect heat zone, lower the cover, and grill 3 more minutes until cooked through. Remove meat from the grill to a cutting board and carve. Arrange grilled breasts on a serving platter and serve wrapped in tortillas, if desired, with commercial Asian dipping sauce on the side.

PICKLE JUICE-BRINED BREASTS WITH BARBECUE SPICE RUB

Add 1–1 ½ c. leftover sweet or dill pickle juice to a 1-gallon plastic freezer bag. Add breasts. Refrigerate 2–4 hours. Light grill and mix 3 T. packed brown sugar, 1 T. paprika, 1 T. chili powder, 2 t. garlic powder, ½ t. salt, ½ t. pepper, and ½ t. cayenne in a small bowl. Whisk in 2 T. olive oil. Remove breasts from brine, pat dry with paper towels, and apply the rub on both sides. Grill breasts. Serve with pickles and rice.

MARSALA AND MUSHROOMS BREASTS

Heat 1 T. oil in a medium-sized skillet. Dredge breasts in seasoned flour and brown in oil, 2 minutes per side. Remove from skillet to a serving platter. Heat 1 T. oil in the skillet, add 8 oz. thinly sliced mushrooms and 1 chopped shallot or ½ small onion and cook 5 minutes. Add 4 T. Marsala and cook until reduced by half. Stir in 3 T. chicken stock and heat for 1 minute. Remove from heat and swirl in 1 T. butter until melted. Pour sauce over the meat and garnish with chopped parsley.