Cumin Chicken Skewers with Lentil Bulgur Pilaf

8 short chicken skewers; 2 per serving with one quarter of the pilaf | Active 25 min | Cook 20 min | Total 45 min

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lb boneless skinless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch/2.5 cm pieces (680 g)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (30 ml), divided equally between chicken and pilaf
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice (30 ml)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin (4 g)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced (9 g), divided: 2 cloves for chicken and 1 for pilaf
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper (1 g), divided
- 1 small onion, finely diced (100 g)
- 1 large carrot, diced small (150 g prepared)
- 1 cup medium bulgur (200 g dry)
- 2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth (480 ml)
- 1 1/4 cups cooked green or brown lentils, drained (240 g)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley (8 g)

Set out

8 short metal skewers, about 8 inches/20 cm, that fit the pan, Large grill pan or heavy skillet, Lidded medium saucepan, Tongs, Food thermometer

Allergens

Wheat; check broth label for additional allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Mix chicken with 1 tablespoon oil, lemon juice, cumin, 2 minced garlic cloves, half the salt and half the black pepper. Keep refrigerated while starting the pilaf.

2. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in the saucepan over medium heat. Cook onion and carrot for 6–7 minutes until softened. Stir in remaining garlic for 30 seconds, then add bulgur, broth, remaining salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer, cover and cook on low for 12–15 minutes, or according to the medium bulgur package, until broth is absorbed and bulgur is tender.

3. Fold cooked lentils into the pilaf. Cover and heat gently for 3–4 minutes and longer if needed until the lentils reach 165°F/74°C, then remove from heat and stir in parsley. Keep covered while finishing chicken.

4. Thread chicken equally onto 8 short metal skewers. Wash hands and clean raw-chicken equipment. Heat the grill pan over medium-high heat and cook skewers for 10–14 minutes, turning every 3–4 minutes, until the largest chicken pieces reach 165°F/74°C. Use batches if necessary; allow extra time for a second batch.

5. Divide pilaf among four plates and top each with two skewers. Remove meat from hot metal skewers before eating.

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Estimated nutrition per serving

Calories: 550 kcal | Protein: 52.5 g | Carbohydrate: 58.4 g | Fat: 12.5 g | Fiber: 12.8 g. One of 4 servings. Batch yield: 8 short chicken skewers; 2 per serving with one quarter of the pilaf. Base ingredients and full measured oil included; optional variations excluded. Estimates vary with brands, cooking and actual portions.

A grain base that is easy to divide

Fluff the pilaf and portion it into four containers before adding chicken. Two skewers per portion make the cooked yield visible, but slide the meat off before storage. A container without hot metal is easier to pack and safer to handle at the next meal.

A useful detail

The timing assumes a pan large enough for the skewers without crowding. If using wooden skewers, soak according to the package and allow that additional time before cooking; keep exposed wood away from direct flame. Use lentils cooked today or yesterday and safely chilled, or a freshly opened ready-cooked product; follow any shorter packet opening limit. Earlier lentil cooking is not included in this recipe time.

Another way

Use 680 g boneless skinless chicken thigh pieces and check every skewer reaches 165°F/74°C.

Replace carrots with 150 g finely diced red pepper for a softer, sweeter vegetable in the pilaf.

Keep it well

Refrigerate chicken removed from skewers and pilaf in shallow containers within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Keep at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days. Reheat both to 165°F/74°C, adding a little water to the pilaf. Transport chilled portions with two cold sources. For home-cooked lentils, use the finished dish within 3 days of their original cooking date, or the shorter stated storage limit; assembling or warming them does not restart that clock.