

Dan Ralston's Kitchen

Italian Sweet and Sour Chicken

Serves 6-8

This is a variation on a Mario Batali recipe published in Food and Wine. It is a great entertainment dish for a number of reasons; it is delicious, can serve a bunch, (if you have a big enough skillet you can increase it for 10) it is inexpensive and it can be made earlier in the day and then reheated just before serving. I serve it with soft polenta with parmesan and crusty bread.

6-8 Skinless chicken thighs

4 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

2 Carrots coarsely chopped

2 Celery stalks coarsely chopped

6-10 Peeled garlic cloves

¼ Cup sugar

1 Cup red wine (preferably Chianti and not something heavy like a Cab)

½ Cup red wine vinegar

½ Cup orange juice

2 Tbsp Capers rinsed (optional, they are good if you have them available)

2 Tbsp golden raisins

¼ cup sliced almonds

Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat 2 Tbsp olive oil in a large and deep skillet. Add the chicken and brown on both sides, about 8-10 minutes. Turn off the heat and transfer the chicken to a plate. Pour off the fat from skillet, heat the remaining 2 Tbsp olive oil and then sauté the vegetables, stirring, until starting to brown. Stir in the sugar then every ingredient and bring to a boil while stirring. Add the chicken and any juices from the plate; reduce the heat and simmer partially covered for about 35 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through. At this point you can turn off the heat and let cool uncovered until completely cool then cover and refrigerate.

Let the skillet come to room temperature then gently heat until hot, remove the chicken again and turn up the heat, boil the sauce, stirring until reduced and thick. Return the chicken and heat through, adjust salt and pepper to your taste and serve. I put some sauce on the plates, put a piece of chicken on top then add a little more sauce on top. You could also serve this with penne and parmesan.