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Thai Grilled Chicken with Sweet & Spicy Dipping Sauce

Chicken

- 3 medium cloves garlic
- 2 teaspoons whole black peppercorns, coarsely ground
- 2 tablespoons minced cilantro stems
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce (see Tips)
- 1/2 cup "lite" coconut milk
- 4 pounds bone-in chicken drumsticks and thighs (about 12 pieces), skin removed, trimmed

Dipping Sauce

- 1/2 cup rice vinegar or cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

- 1) To prepare chicken: Combine garlic cloves, pepper, cilantro stems and pinch of salt in a large mortar or food processor or food mill and mash or pulse to a coarse paste. Transfer to a large bowl; stir in fish sauce and coconut milk. Add chicken and stir to coat with the marinade. Refrigerate, loosely covered, for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour.
- 2) Preheat grill to medium. (No grill? See broiler variation, below.)
- 3) To prepare sauce: Heat vinegar to a boil in a small nonreactive pan. Add sugar, stir to dissolve it, then reduce heat and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes. Add crushed red pepper and minced garlic; simmer for 1 minute more. Remove from the heat and stir in salt. Pour into a serving bowl and let cool to room temperature before serving.
- 4) Remove the chicken from the marinade. (Discard marinade.) Oil the grill rack (see Tips). Grill, turning occasionally, until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part without touching bone registers 165°F, 15 to 20 minutes.
- 5) Serve the chicken with the dipping sauce.

Tip: Oil a grill rack before you grill to keep the food from sticking to the rack. Oil a folded paper towel, hold it with tongs and rub it over the rack. (Do not use cooking spray on a hot grill—it may cause a flare-up.)

Broiler Variation: Preheat broiler to high. Place chicken in a roasting pan and broil about 5 inches from the heat, leaving the oven door ajar. Check after 8 minutes or so; the chicken pieces should be browning. Turn them over and cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part without touching bone registers 165°F, about 8 minutes more.

Makes 6 servings

