Chef’s Log 9 November 2008
Market Meltdown Chicken Take 3

I could have gotten out of the market at 9600 just before the election, but that seemed a rude thing to do the day before the election. I mean, who was I to jinx Senator Obama’s chances by accidentally starting a market sell-off. So I stuck it out and I am eating chicken again. We started with generic store brand bulk pack economy chicken. Jean made a Cornell marinade, I added a thick coating of hot hot hot Jamaican Jerk Rub, and it started to show some promise. The rub contains sweet spices like ginger, allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves, and I upped the ante by increasing the amount of chopped dundicut peppers, the closest thing I can find to dried Scotch Bonnets.
After Jean baked the chicken inside (minimal clean up compared to cleaning out the smoker after slow cooking several pounds of chicken) I through it on the Weber to crisp it and to add notes of allspice and mesquite smoke. Jean wanted hers crisped. I wanted my blackened. Jean also prepared the leeks and the squash, so in this case I did precious little except prepare the Jerk rub and carefully char my chicken. Delicate timing, but it worked fine ... blackened but not dried.

This was indeed another market meltdown dinner. Along with the chicken we had, leeks, wild rice, and pureed crookneck squash. I’m pretty sure that the chicken was cheaper per pound than anything else on the table. Probably cheaper per pound than the paper napkins, actually!

One of my friends has a daughter at the Culinary Institute of America. While graduates of the CIA are too polite and too professional to laugh at the efforts of us unskilled and untrained home chefs in a hurry, Steve always finds my attempts at plating my dinners to be wryly, humorously, no, totally and riotously incompetent. While a CIA graduate would see my efforts as those of a promising and discerning customer, a proud CIA parent sees me, equally accurately, as a hopeless amateur.

But at least, in my case, a cheerful one! And the extra slam of Scotch Bonnets left a numbing, painful, and thoroughly delightful throbbing in my mouth and lips. Yes ... this is chicken as it was meant to be enjoyed, moist after marinating, crisp after grilling, and tasting of sweet spices, smoke, and pain. Who could tell it was chicken?

And, as you can plainly see, this is “meal of the week.” I did not expect to eat six pieces of grilled Jerk chicken in one sitting.

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