



From the Kitchen of Chef Xavier Jaramillo

Jerk Chicken

Yield: Serves 6-8

Prep Time: 20 minutes (+ marination)

Cook Time: 45-60 minutes

Heat Level: Adjustable (Mild or Hot)

Ingredients:

½ cup Walkerswood Jerk Marinade (mild or hot)

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1½ Tbsp. gluten-free soy sauce

1 tsp. browning liquid

1½ tsp. poultry seasoning

1 tsp. kosher salt (reduce slightly if marinade is salty)

1 whole chicken, 3½-4 lbs., cut into 8-10 pieces

Process:

To marinate: In a bowl, whisk together jerk marinade, olive oil, soy sauce, browning liquid, poultry seasoning and kosher salt. Rub marinade thoroughly over chicken pieces, working under the skin where possible. Cover and marinate at least 6 hours, preferably overnight (12-24 hours) for best flavor.

To cook: Preheat smoker or grill with indirect heat to 225-250°F. Use pimento wood if available, or a light fruitwood, like apple/cherry.

Place chicken skin-side up and smoke 30-40 minutes, just until the meat absorbs smoke and begins to firm. The goal is flavor infusion, not for chicken to be fully cooked.

To finish: Transfer chicken to a grill set at 300-325°F, indirect heat. Grill slowly, turning occasionally, until internal temperature reaches 165°F in the breast piece and 175-180°F for thighs and legs.

Optional: Finish skin-side down over gentle direct heat for 2-3 minutes to crisp, but watch closely. Serve with rice and peas, Caribbean sautéed cabbage, fried plantains or mango or pineapple slaw.

Chef's Notes

- Moisture control: Keep grill lid closed; jerk burns easily due to sugar and spices.
- Color: Browning liquid gives classic jerk color - use sparingly.
- Heat balance: For mild service, brush lightly with honey or pineapple juice during the final minutes (optional, not traditional but effective).
- For catering or large batches: Smoke chicken first, then chill. Finish on grill or in a 325°F oven for service.



Chef Xavier Jaramillo, Xav's Jammin' Caribbean Fusion

Chef Xavier Jaramillo is the current Operations Director for School Nutrition at the Detroit Public Schools Community District. He previously served as Executive Chef and Food Service Manager for Spectrum Juvenile Justice Services (SJJS).

Born in Jamaica, West Indies, Chef Jaramillo later moved to New York City, where he matriculated through the New York Public School system and earned his high school diploma in 1996. He received a Bachelor degree in Liberal Arts from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids in 2000, followed by an Associate degree in Culinary Arts from Schoolcraft College in Livonia in 2010. That same year, he earned his Culinary Certification from the American Culinary Federation.

In July 2017, Chef Jaramillo became a Culinary Instructor for Operation ABLE and currently serves on the Leadership Board of the Detroit Restaurant and Lodging Association. An entrepreneur at heart, he is the founder of Xav's Catering, Xav's Jammin Caribbean Fusion Food Truck, and opened his first restaurant in Fall 2025 in Farmington Hills.

Chef Jaramillo is married and the proud father of three daughters.

