

Deep Breath Chicken



Setting Up Ingredients

Something happens when you have a baby. Something bizarre that NO ONE can prepare you for. People seem to lose their filter, especially women. I got a taste of this phenomenon when I was pregnant. People, especially women, loved to tell me their birth stories and more often than not these birth stories were horrifying! I get it. I get that experiencing and living through childbirth is something to be proud of, especially if that labor experience was a rough one. It's a woman's red badge of courage and you wanna get it out there—share how proud you are of yourself. However, it never made sense to me that a person, especially another woman, could tell a labor horror story to a visibly pregnant woman but people did and they did it a lot. I was looking forward to no longer hearing these stories once the little baby was here. What I didn't expect to happen was that these stories would shift to strangers needing to tell you how well their babies sleep at night and how long they nursed their children for and yada yada yada. I've had strangers ask me if I breast feed like this is an acceptable question. That particular question is a

trigger for me as I really struggled to nurse and eventually, just couldn't produce enough so we went to straight formula. If you think one Shabbat night I didn't break down for feeling betrayed by my body you would be mistaken. And so now, whenever anyone inappropriately asks me if I nurse I just throw it out there and watch the awkwardness set in, "Nope. Producing breast milk was nearly impossible for me so we feed her formula. Have a nice day!" You can see it on their faces, the "oh sh*t, did not expect you to be honest with me and now I feel super awkward" face. Maybe I should ease up on folks. I don't see that happening but maybe I should ☐



Recently, I had a coworker who I respect tell me out and out that what I was doing for my baby's sleep routine was wrong. I mean she literally said, "You're doing it all wrong". Ummmmm, what? Don't I look rested? Have you asked me if my baby is happy and healthy? Yikes. It was right then and there that I decided that this all had to stop. We, as women, NEED to stop judging one another for their parenting choices and we certainly have to stop scaring pregnant women and new mothers. I mean, for crying out loud, let's be a little more nurturing here, yes? I'll admit it, I've absolutely silently judged the choices of fellow parents but it is brutal enough out there as a woman, as a parent, etc. Therefore, I'm making the decision

right here and now to stop it. It's exhausting and not worth it. Why make it harder on each other? It boggles the mind. It really does. (Deep Exhale).

So why the rant? I could not stop thinking about this interaction all day on Friday. This, on top of some other stressful work stuff, resulted in me being THIS close to ordering Chinese food for Shabbat and calling it a day. But instead of taking the easy way out I seized the opportunity to cook while also having decent light for pictures and the result was what I am now calling, "Let's All Take a BIG Deep Breath" Chicken. I hope you enjoy. Thanks for listening.



Take a deep breath—it smells DELICIOUS

What?

1 1/2 – 2 pounds chicken leg quarters
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
Coarse salt and pepper to taste
1 small eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch dice
1 medium zucchini, cut into 1/2-inch dice
1 small sweet onion, diced

2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup white wine
14.5 ounce can diced tomatoes with juices
1/4 cup pimento-stuffed green olives, chopped
2 tablespoons capers, rinsed
2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar (I substituted for Apple Cider Vinegar)
1 teaspoon sugar
2 tablespoons freshly-minced parsley
2 tablespoons freshly-minced cilantro

How's That Now?

1. In large skillet over medium high-heat, warm 2 tablespoons olive oil. Season leg quarters with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper. Add leg quarters to pan, skin-side down. Brown chicken, turning once, 8 to 10 minutes per side. Remove chicken to plate and drain off all but 2 tablespoons oil.
2. Add eggplant to hot pan and cook, stirring, 5 minutes. Add remaining tablespoon olive oil, along with zucchini, onion and garlic. Cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Raise heat to high and add white wine to pan, stirring to scrape up any browned bits. Add all other ingredients, except parsley and cilantro, and place chicken legs in mixture. Bring to boil, reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 35 to 40 minutes or until cooked through or until an instant read thermometer reads 170F.
4. Do yourself a favor and serve this with Israeli Couscous. You'll have a lot of leftover vegetable topping and it'll go nicely on top of the couscous. Sprinkle with parsley and cilantro and enjoy!