

Souvlaki

Ingredients -

- Chicken thighs
- White onion
- Oregano (dried / fresh / bit of both)
- Garlic
- Olive oil
- Lemon
- White wine
- Salt & Pepper
- Skewers
- Flatbread / pita
- Tzatziki (recipe provided separately)

Method –

1. You want your chicken thighs boned and skinned, either do this yourself or ask your butcher to do it for you, give them a call the day before as you want to keep the skins. They are going to be used later to give the most tender chicken you have ever cooked on the BBQ. I've used 15 thighs here which was perfect for 10 good sized souvlaki pitas.
2. Next up get your chicken cut up. You're not looking for those big chunky pieces you usually see on a BBQ in the UK but smaller pieces which will allow you to cook them through without drying out the outside. Flatten out your thighs, separating out the sections and aim for around 1cm cuts, place them in a mixing bowl, ready to add your onion and marinade.
3. Chop your onion, you want pieces the same size as your chicken to give an even sized kebab. Chop in half, slice down the middle going with the grain and then make 4 more cuts against the grain. Add to the bowl with the chicken, roughly separating out the pieces as you do. 4 onions was perfect for this recipe.
4. Oregano is the main flavour in this recipe and one of the few herbs which seems to have a better and stronger flavour dried than fresh, I've used 4 heaped tablespoons of dried here but it's up to you which you use. If using fresh increase the quantity by 50%. Add to your mix along with the roughly chopped garlic (4 cloves), salt, ground black pepper 1 heaped tablespoon of both, and the juice of a whole lemon.
5. Add a small glass of white wine (125ml) and then enough olive oil to cover your mix. If you can, use cold pressed olive oil from Greece to give the most authentic flavour, it really does make a difference! Get everything mixed, leaving this to marinade overnight will add an additional 10% flavour to your finished product but if you don't have time for this it's still going to be great!



6. Get your skewers made up, you want to have one slice of onion, then around 1 cm of chicken, then onion again and so on. Some of your chicken thigh pieces will be thin so use 2 or 3 before your next piece of onion. You also want to use the whole skewer, you're not going to be eating from the stick so get that meat right from the bottom to the top.
7. Now this step is the secret that will stop you having dry chicken and keep it succulent and tender all the way through. You're going to wrap you skewers in the chicken skin, you'll need 2 skins per skewer. Lay the skins flat, wrap them round and just give them a bit of a squeeze to tighten them on, they should stick to themselves and it doesn't matter if it's a bit rough with a few gaps. They are going to protect your chicken from the high heat of the BBQ and release their fats and flavours on to your kebabs, basting them as they cook.
8. Get your BBQ going, charcoal will give a bit of a boost to the flavour!
9. You want to have a lemon and salt to hand for cooking the kebabs and also some olive oil mixed with a bit of oregano and salt for when you grill your breads.
10. Get them on the grill, they are going to need 10 – 15 minutes depending on the heat coming off your BBQ. Cook with the skin on for the first 3 quarters of your cooking time, about 7-8 minutes on a hot grill. At this point your skins should be bubbling and crisping up.
11. Use some tongs to remove the skin, you should be seeing white, cooked through and juicy chicken as you unwrap your skewers. They still have another quarter of their cooking time to go, 2-3 minutes on a hot grill, giving a bit of a crispy and charred look to the outside without drying out the meat.
12. During this time you want to be hitting them with generous amounts of salt and fresh lemon juice whilst they cook, really adding a final blast of flavour. Once their done get them on the warming rack on the BBQ if you have one or just put to one side whilst you warm your bread.
13. I've used flat breads, but a nice fluffy pita will also do the trick. Give each side a light coating of your oil, oregano and salt mixture and heat on the grill, this should need no more than a minute on each side.
14. Run a knife down the skewer, slicing your chicken and onion in half.
15. Get a generous spoon full of your fresh tzatziki on your bread, add your chicken and onion and then some more tzatziki on top, enjoy!



