

Savor Sicilian skewered chicken

Chef Mark Gordon shares his recipe for this authentic appetizer

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Food editor

TODAY

July. 22, 2008

As executive chef/co-owner of Terzo, Mark Gordon features pan-Mediterranean cuisine inspired by his travels, with dishes changing daily to showcase seasonal, fresh produce purchased direct from local, organic farmers.

This week we have permission to steal Mark Gordon's free-range chicken spiedini recipe — an inspiration from Sicily and a signature small plate at Terzo. "Spiedini" means skewers in Italian, and Terzo's free-range chicken spiedini is made with a special marinade, onion and house-made bread. The marinade is made the old-fashioned way by mixing serrano chili, cilantro, chili flakes, sweet paprika, bay leaf and garlic with a pestle and mortar. Chef Gordon's daily-changing menu combines the flavors of Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Provençal France and coastal Italy with the best of Northern California ingredients.

Some of his other dishes at Terzo include fried egg bruschetta with green garlic and spinach, grilled sea bass with garbanzo beans and charmoula and roasted eggplant with Moroccan spiced yogurt and pomegranate molasses.

About the chef: Mark Gordon is full of creative talents — after exploring many arenas, including zoology and photography, his passion for cooking led him to begin his culinary career at the Kendall College Culinary program in Chicago. Upon graduation, he moved to California and worked his way up in various Bay Area kitchens, including Fetzer Winery's Culinary Center and San Francisco's 42 Degrees. In October 2000, he joined Rose's Café as executive chef. After five years he was ready for another challenge and worked closely with owner Laurie Thomas to create a concept for a new sister restaurant; Terzo. In June 2005, he traveled with Thomas, architect Cass Calder Smith and the rest of the design team to Sicily, Rome, Lisbon, Seville and Madrid to help solidify the design concept and brainstorm the menu for Terzo. Gordon explains, "To meander through the markets, restaurants and shops gave me a better knowledge of the food and how to emulate what the locals do at home. We put a lot of effort into making the food as genuine as possible, and this can only be accomplished by seeing first-hand how it's done in a dish's native land."

In April 2006, Terzo opened for dinner and instantly gained critical acclaim.

Gordon lives in Oakland with his wife Lori Podroza, who is a sous chef at Terzo. When they are not working, they enjoy traveling and dining around the Bay Area.

Terzo

3011 Steiner Street

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Art Gray

Chef Mark Gordon

Terzo's free-range chicken spiedini with bread, cilantro, chile and onion are served for \$11 at the restaurant.

Chicken spiedini

Chef Mark Gordon, Terzo restaurant

12 skewers

INGREDIENTS

For chicken marinade:

- 1 garlic clove, peeled and sliced
- 1 bay leaf, crumbled
- 2 teaspoons sweet paprika
- 1/2 tablespoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon dried crushed chili flakes
- 1 serrano chili, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 2 splashes sherry vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

For spiedini:

- 2 pounds skinless, boneless free-range chicken cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/2 loaf country white bread with the crusts removed and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves, roughly chopped
- 12 8-inch bamboo skewers

DIRECTIONS

For marinade:

Place all ingredients into a food processor and blend until combined & coarsely chopped.

For spiedini:

Soak the skewers in warm water.

Place the cubed chicken into a mixing bowl and toss thoroughly with 2 tablespoons of the marinade. (The chicken can be marinated overnight for a stronger flavor.)

Toss the bread cubes in another bowl with the olive oil, salt and pepper to taste.

Skewer the chicken, bread and onion in that order, then repeat, ending with an extra cube of chicken. You should end up with 3 cubes of chicken and 2 cubes of bread and onion on each skewer.

Grill over a medium wood or charcoal fire until just done. Brush on the remaining marinade and sprinkle with the cilantro leaves.