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Cider-Braised Chicken Thighs With Apples and Greens

By Lidey Heuck

YIELD: 4 servings

TIME: 50 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ to 2 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 4 to 6)
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons canola or grapeseed oil
- 1 cup thinly sliced shallots (2 to 3 medium shallots)
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh sage leaves
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ¾ cup fresh apple cider (You really want good cider here, not juice, though juice is better than not making the recipe)
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar, plus more to taste
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ¾ to 1 cup chicken broth, preferably low-sodium
- 1 bunch curly kale (10 to 12 ounces), stemmed, leaves torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 crisp red apple, such as Fuji, cored and thinly sliced (fine local options include Mutsu, Golden Heritage, Sweet 16, Golden Russet, Crimson Gala...or your local favorite)

PREPARATION

1. Pat the chicken thighs dry and season generously with salt and pepper.
2. In a Dutch oven or heavy pot, heat the oil over medium. Cook the chicken thighs skin-side down, undisturbed, until the skin is golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Flip and cook until lightly browned on the other side, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate.
3. Pour off all but about 3 tablespoons of fat from the pot, turn the heat to medium-low, then add the shallots and sage. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the shallots are translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Be careful not to let the garlic burn.

4. Add the cider, cider vinegar, mustard, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and cook, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan, until the cider has reduced slightly, 2 to 3 minutes. Return the chicken and any accumulated juices to the pot, skin-side up. Pour just enough broth around (not on!) the chicken to cover the sides of the thighs but not cover the skin on top.
 5. Bring to a boil, then turn the heat to low. Partly cover and gently simmer until the thighs are cooked through and tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a clean plate or sheet pan (if you'd like to broil the chicken in the next step). Raise the heat to medium, and add the kale and apple to the pot. Cook, tossing often, until all the kale is wilted, the apples are just softened and the liquid has reduced slightly, about 5 minutes. While the greens cook, if you'd like to crisp the skin on the chicken, pop it under the broiler for 2 to 3 minutes.
 6. Taste for seasoning, and stir in 1 or 2 more teaspoons cider vinegar to taste. Divide the chicken and kale mixture among shallow bowls; serve with crusty bread to mop up broth.
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