

Roast Chicken Thighs With Jerk Corn and Lime



The Chef:

Nina Compton

Her Restaurant:

Compère Lapin in New Orleans

What She

Is Known For:

Endearing herself to television audiences and New Orleanians alike. Flavorful dishes that recall her Caribbean upbringing with warmth and elegance.

THIS CHICKEN TELLS the story of Nina Compton's evolution as a chef pretty neatly. It began in St. Lucia, when she was 17, with the first serious meal she cooked. As her family enjoyed her canapés and cocktails on the patio, she said, "I had this moment of seeing all the people I love very happy. After that I told my mom, 'I want to be a chef.'"

Ms. Compton went to culinary school and worked her way up the line in New York, at places such as Daniel, before becoming chef de cuisine at Scarpetta in Miami. But she really found her voice as a contestant on Bravo's "Top Chef New

Orleans." "That's when I fell in love with cooking again," she said. After that, restaurant offers came flooding in; the right one promised the freedom to express herself. "I was told, 'We want you to be yourself and do whatever you want,' " she said.

That turned out to be Compère Lapin, where New Orleanians have warmed right up to Ms. Compton's style of cooking—approachable and personal. In this recipe, the roast chicken nods to the simple, robust Italian dishes Ms. Compton mastered in Miami; the corn's jerk seasoning references her Caribbean roots. On the plate it all makes sense. —Kitty Greenwald

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes SERVES: 4

4 skin-on chicken thighs

Kosher salt

Zest of 2 limes

1½ teaspoons red chili flakes

1 tablespoon whole allspice

½ teaspoon ground

cinnamon

½ teaspoon cumin seeds

1 teaspoon black pepper-

corns

3 tablespoons butter

1 pint cherry tomatoes,

halved

2 habanero chilies, sliced

Kernels from 4 ears corn

3 tablespoons thinly sliced

basil

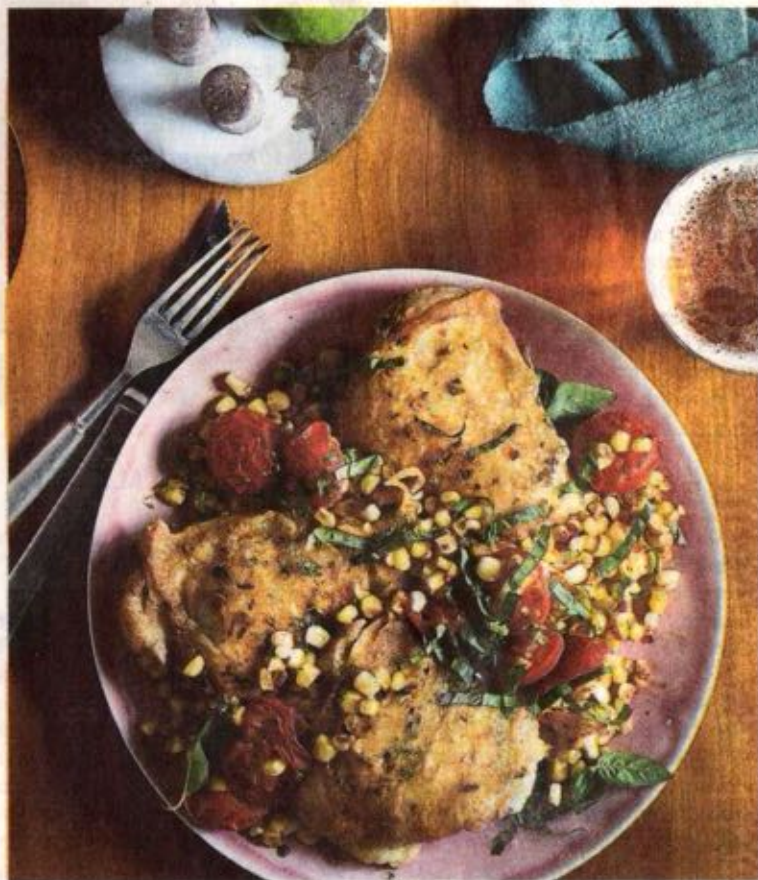
Lime wedges, to serve

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a roasting pan, rub chicken with a generous pinch of salt, lime zest and ¼ teaspoon chili flakes. Roast until skin crisps and meat cooks through, about 20 minutes.

2. In a mortar and pestle or a spice grinder, grind allspice, cinnamon, remaining chili flakes, cumin and black pepper together until finely ground and combined.

3. Set a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat and add butter. Once bubbling, add tomatoes and cook until blistered, about 3 minutes. Add chilies and cook until aromatic, 30 seconds. Stir in ground spices and sauté until aromatic, 30 seconds more. Add corn and cook until heated through, 2 minutes. Season with salt to taste. Off heat, stir in basil.

4. Serve chicken with corn and lime wedges.



TASTE OF SUMMER Cherry tomatoes sautéed in butter to concentrate their sweetness make a lip-smacking match for the spicy corn and chicken.