

Smoked Chicken Breast on Traeger

1. Prep the Chicken (Optional Brine):

- For juicier results, brine chicken breasts in a salt-water solution for 1-2 hours in the fridge. Rinse and pat dry with paper towels after brining.
- If not brining, pat the chicken dry to ensure crispy skin.

2. Season the Chicken:

- Rub chicken breasts with a thin layer of olive oil or melted butter to help the seasoning stick and promote browning.
- Generously apply your dry rub or seasoning to all sides of the chicken.

3. Preheat the Traeger:

- Fill the hopper with your chosen wood pellets (apple or cherry for a mild, sweet flavor; hickory for a stronger, smokier taste).
- Set the Traeger to 225°F (low and slow for maximum smoke flavor) and let it preheat for 10-15 minutes with the lid closed.

4. Smoke the Chicken:

- Place the chicken breasts directly on the grill grates, bone side down if using bone-in.
- Close the lid and smoke at 225°F for 1.5-2 hours, or until the internal temperature reaches 160°F (check with a meat thermometer in the thickest part of the breast).
- Optional: For crispier skin, increase the Traeger temperature to 350°F for the last 10-15 minutes of cooking to finish at 165°F internal temperature.

5. Rest and Serve:

- Remove the chicken from the grill and let it rest for 5-10 minutes, tented loosely with foil, to allow juices to redistribute. The internal temperature will rise to 165°F during resting.
- Slice or serve whole with your favorite sides (e.g., grilled veggies, coleslaw, or mashed potatoes).

Tips:

- Use a meat thermometer to avoid overcooking—165°F is the safe internal temperature for chicken.
- Avoid opening the lid too often to maintain consistent temperature and smoke.
- Experiment with pellet flavors to suit your taste; applewood pairs especially well with chicken.
- For extra flavor, baste with a light layer of BBQ sauce during the last 10 minutes of cooking (if desired).