



# The Scent of Kathmandu After Dark

Imagine walking through the streets of Kathmandu. The air is alive with the smell of wood smoke and toasted Himalayan spices. This is the scent of Sekuwa, the heart of Nepali barbecue. This is your guide to recreating that magic at home.







# More Than a Kebab: The Soul of Sekuwa.



Sekuwa is meat roasted over a natural wood or charcoal fire—an ancient cooking method perfected by the **Limbu** and **Rai** communities in Eastern Nepal.

- The city of **Dharan** is considered the 'Sekuwa Capital,' where the traditional '**Bhatti**' (a small grill) is a cornerstone of local cuisine.







From vibrant festivals to casual family gatherings, Sekuwa is a cultural staple, a symbol of **community** and **celebration**.





# Understanding the Unique Profile of Chicken Sekuwa

	Chicken Sekuwa	Seekh Kebab	Chicken Shawarma
 <b>Meat Form</b>	Small chunks/cubes	Minced meat	Sliced from a spit
 <b>Main Spice</b>	Timmur (Szechuan Pepper)	Garam Masala/Cumin	Cumin/Coriander/Allspice
 <b>Cooking Tool</b>	Charcoal grill (Bhatti)	Tandoor or grill	Vertical rotisserie
 <b>Texture</b>	Firm with a smoky char	Soft and uniform	Thin strips

The difference is in the details: whole meat chunks and the signature Himalayan spice, Timnur







# The Foundation: Choosing the Perfect Cut of Chicken.



## For Juicy, Forgiving Sekuwa: Choose Thighs.

Thigh meat contains more fat, which melts during grilling, naturally basting the chicken and keeping it incredibly moist and flavorful.



## If Using Breast Meat...

Breast meat is leaner and can dry out quickly. If you must use it, cut the pieces larger to help retain moisture during the high-heat cooking process.

**Pro Tip:** Look for air-chilled chicken. It hasn't been soaked in water, which allows it to absorb the marinade more effectively.





# The Alchemy of Flavor: Essential Marinade Ingredients

## **Timmur**

### **(Szechuan Pepper):**

The signature ingredient. Provides a unique numbing, citrusy kick.

## **Mustard Oil:**

Non-negotiable. Adds a pungent, smoky base essential for authenticity.

## **Fresh Ginger & Garlic Paste:**

For a vibrant, aromatic foundation.

## **Cumin & Coriander Powder:**

Adds deep, earthy notes.

## **Turmeric:**

For its classic golden color and subtle warmth.

## **Chilli Powder:**

Adjust to your preferred level of heat.

**Lemon Juice:** To tenderize the meat and brighten the flavors.





# The Science of the Perfect Marinade: Why Yogurt is Essential

Yogurt is more than a flavor agent; it's a scientific tool for tenderness.

## Gentle Tenderizing

Yogurt contains **lactic acid**, which gently and slowly **breaks** down the lean muscle fibers in the chicken. Unlike harsh vinegars, it prevents the meat from becoming mushy or chalky.

## Heat Protection

It also creates a **thick coating** that adheres to the meat, protecting it from the intense heat of the grill. This locks in moisture, ensuring your Sekuwa is juicy on the inside with a perfect char on the outside.





# Step 1: The Preparation

## Precision in Every Cut

Start with **1 kg of boneless chicken thighs**.

**Trim** excess hanging fat, but leave some intact for moisture and flavor.

**Cut** the chicken into uniform **1.5-inch cubes**.

**Why Uniformity Matters:** Same-sized pieces ensure even cooking. If some are small and others large, the small ones will burn before the large ones are cooked through.





## Step 2: Crafting the Marinade.

### The Heartbeat of the Dish.



In a large bowl, whisk the following ingredients together until smooth:

- 1/2 cup thick yogurt
- 2 tablespoons mustard oil
- 1 tablespoon ginger-garlic paste
- 1 teaspoon toasted and crushed Timmur
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon coriander powder
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- Salt to taste

**\*\*Taste the marinade before adding the chicken.\*\***

It should taste slightly saltier than you think is necessary. The meat will absorb the salt as it marinates.





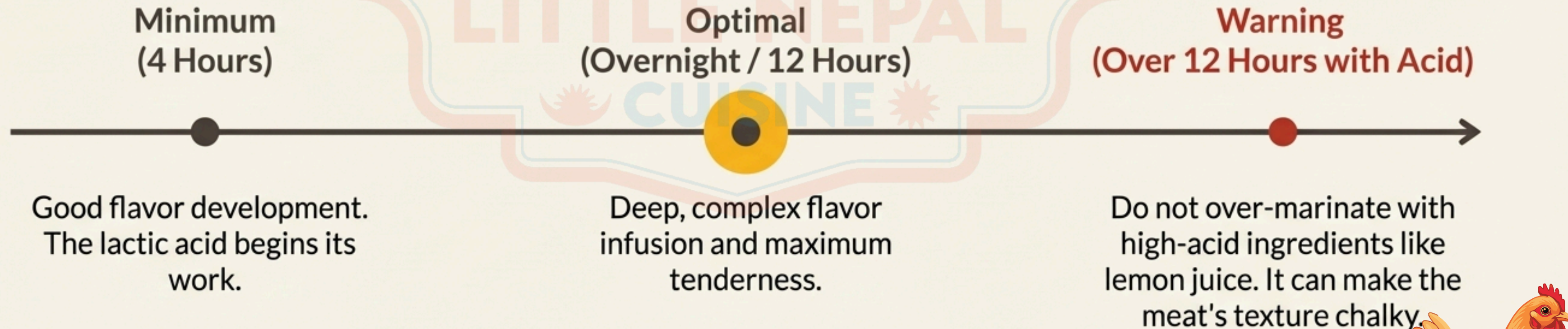
# Step 3: The Art of Marination.

Patience is the Final Ingredient.

Add the chicken cubes to the marinade.

**Use your hands to massage** the marinade into every piece. Don't just stir.

**Cover and refrigerate.** Cold meat holds its shape better on skewers.





# The Ritual of Fire: The Charcoal Grill Method

The Gold Standard for Smoky Flavor.

1. **Thread the chicken** onto metal skewers, leaving a small gap between each piece for even heat circulation.
2. **Wait for coals to be grey and glowing**—this indicates peak, steady heat.
3. **Grill, turning every 2-3 minutes.** The goal is a deep char without burning.
4. **Brush with extra mustard oil or butter** halfway through for added flavor and moisture.
5. **Embrace the smoke.** The dripping marinade and fat hitting the coals creates the signature sekuwa flavor.





# No Grill? No Problem. Modern Cooking Methods.

Achieve Char and Flavor Indoors



## Air Fryer Method

Preheat to **200°C (400°F)**.

Arrange chicken in a single layer. Do not overcrowd.  
Cook for **12-15 minutes**, shaking the basket halfway through.



## Oven Broiler Method

Set oven to '**Broil**' on its highest setting.  
Place chicken on a wire rack over a baking sheet.  
Cook for approximately **10 minutes per side**, until charred and cooked through.





# The Moment of Truth: Cooking to Perfection.



**The Magic Number:**  
Cook until the internal  
temperature reaches  
**74°C (165°F).**

Time is a guideline, but temperature is a fact.

The only way to guarantee perfectly juicy and safe chicken is to use a digital meat thermometer.

**The Danger Zone:** Overcooking by just 5 degrees can be the difference between succulent and tough. Remove the sekuwa from the heat as soon as it hits the target temperature.





# The Expert's Edge: Pro-Tips for Flawless Sekuwa

## Flawless Sekuwa

### High Heat is Your Friend.

Slow cooking on low heat dries out chicken. A very hot grill or broiler sears the outside, locking in juices.

### Let it Sear.

When grilling or pan-frying, don't move the chicken for the first 3 minutes. This allows the sugars in the yogurt to caramelize, creating that restaurant-style crust.

### Don't Cut to Check.

Cutting into the meat lets precious juices escape. Trust your thermometer. No thermometer? Press the meat—it should feel firm but spring back slightly.





# The Final Act: How to Serve Authentic Sekuwa



## The Authentic Pairing

- **Chiura (Beaten Rice):** Serve alongside for a crunchy textural contrast to the soft meat.
- **Achar (Pickle):** A spicy tomato or radish pickle is essential. Its acidity cuts through the richness of the chicken.

## Restaurant-Style Plating Tips

- Serve on a wooden board or platter.
- Garnish with a handful of thinly sliced red onions and fresh coriander.
- Add a wedge of lemon for squeezing.
- For a final aromatic burst, sprinkle with extra toasted Timmur powder just before serving.





# The Soul of Sekuwa is in the Details



**Patience:** Don't rush the marinade. Let time do its work.



**High Heat:** Embrace the fire for that essential smoky char.



**Timmur:** Never forget the signature spice that defines the dish.

You now have the knowledge not just to follow a recipe, but to master an art form. Go light the fire.

