Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 25 minutes | Total Time: 45 minutes

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Introduction

If you've ever stood at a food truck window with a paper tray of elote in hand, you know the magic of Mexican street corn: charred kernels, creamy mayo, tangy lime, salty cotija, and a hit of chili. This Street Corn Chicken Rice Bowl takes all of that energy and turns it into a complete, satisfying dinner bowl. Smoky seared chicken, fluffy rice, and a bright, creamy street corn salad come together in about 45 minutes — most of it hands-off. It's the kind of meal that looks like you tried harder than you did, which is exactly the kind of recipe worth keeping.

Ingredients

For the Chicken

- 1½ lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs (or breasts)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1½ tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- Juice of 1 lime

For the Street Corn

- 3 cups corn kernels (fresh from about 4 ears, or frozen and thawed)
- 1 tbsp olive oil or butter
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup sour cream (or Greek yogurt)
- ½ cup crumbled cotija cheese (feta works as a substitute)
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and finely minced (optional)
- Zest and juice of 1 lime

- ½ tsp chili powder, plus more for serving
- Pinch of kosher salt

For the Bowls

- 3 cups cooked long-grain white rice (about 1 cup dry)
- 1 avocado, sliced
- Extra cilantro and lime wedges, for serving
- Hot sauce, optional

Instructions

Step 1: Marinate the Chicken (10 minutes, low intensity)

Pat the chicken dry with paper towels. In a medium bowl, whisk together the olive oil, smoked paprika, cumin, garlic powder, salt, pepper, and lime juice. Add the chicken and toss to coat. Let it sit at room temperature for 10 minutes while you start the rice. (If you have more time, 30 minutes in the fridge deepens the flavor — just add 10 minutes to your total time.)

Step 2: Cook the Rice (20 minutes, low intensity)

Prepare 1 cup of dry long-grain white rice according to package directions — typically simmered covered on low for 18–20 minutes, then rested off the heat for 5. Fluff with a fork and keep covered until serving.

Step 3: Char the Corn (6–8 minutes, medium-high intensity)

Heat a large cast-iron or heavy skillet over medium-high heat until a drop of water sizzles. Add the olive oil and corn kernels in a single layer. Let them sit undisturbed for 3–4 minutes to develop char, then stir and cook 3–4 minutes more until spotted golden-brown and slightly blistered. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool for 5 minutes.

Step 4: Make the Street Corn Salad (5 minutes, low intensity)

To the warm corn, add the mayonnaise, sour cream, cotija, cilantro, jalapeño (if using), lime zest, lime juice, chili powder, and a pinch of salt. Stir until creamy and evenly combined. Taste and adjust — more lime for brightness, more chili powder for heat. Set aside.

Step 5: Sear the Chicken (10–12 minutes, medium-high intensity)

Wipe the skillet clean and return it to medium-high heat with a teaspoon of oil if needed. Sear the chicken 5–6 minutes per side until deeply browned and the internal temperature reaches 165°F (74°C). Transfer to a cutting board and rest for 5 minutes, then slice against the grain into strips.

Step 6: Assemble the Bowls (3 minutes, low intensity)

Divide the warm rice among four bowls. Top with sliced chicken, a generous scoop of street corn, and sliced avocado. Finish with extra cilantro, a dusting of chili powder, lime wedges, and hot sauce if you like.

Timing & Intensity Summary

Step	**Time**	**Heat/Intensity**
Marinate chicken	10 min	Low (hands-off)
Cook rice	20 min	Low (mostly hands-off)
Char corn	6–8 min	Medium-high (stay close)
Mix street corn	5 min	Low

Step	Time	Heat/Intensity
Sear chicken	10–12 min	Medium-high (active)
Assemble	3 min	Low

Total active time: ~20 minutes | Total time: ~45 minutes

Nutrition (per serving, 4 servings)

- Calories: ~685
- Protein: 42 g
- Carbohydrates: 52 g
- Fat: 34 g
- Saturated Fat: 9 g
- Fiber: 5 g
- Sugar: 6 g
- Sodium: ~720 mg