

CRISPY BAKED CHICKEN

This recipe proves that it is easy to make delicious, crispy chicken without deep frying. Soaking the chicken in buttermilk helps it to tenderize. You can skip this step and simply dip the chicken in the egg mixture and bread crumbs if you don't have buttermilk. Feel free to use 1 pound of drumsticks or thighs instead of breasts, just add a few minutes cooking time.

1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts (2 large or 3 medium breasts)
1-1/2 cups buttermilk
1/4 cup unbleached all purpose flour
1 large egg and 1 egg white or 3 egg whites, lightly beaten
1 cup whole wheat or Panko (Japanese) bread crumbs or 1/2 cup bread crumbs and 1/2 cup crushed cornflake cereal
1/4 cup toasted wheat germ or flaxseed meal
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon paprika
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1-2 tablespoons coconut oil or grapeseed oil
Cooking spray

Cut chicken breasts into 1/4-inch thick strips (4-5 strips per breast). Combine the chicken and buttermilk in a shallow dish or resealable plastic bag. Seal tightly, shake to coat, and chill for 1 hour.

Combine the egg and egg white in a flat-bottomed dish. In a separate dish combine the bread crumbs, wheat germ, garlic powder, paprika, salt, onion powder, and Parmesan cheese.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Remove chicken from the marinade, transfer to a bowl and discard the liquid. Combine the flour and chicken in the bowl and toss to coat evenly. One strip or piece at a time, dip chicken in the egg mixture then toss gently in the bread crumbs to coat.

While breading the chicken, brush 1-2 tablespoons of coconut oil or grapeseed oil onto a baking sheet and place in the oven. Let the pan heat for 3-5 minutes before removing. Arrange chicken in a single layer on the preheated baking sheet. Generously coat chicken with cooking spray and bake for 6 minutes, turn pieces over and cook for 4-6 minutes or until cooked through. Serve with Honey Mustard Sauce(see index), Honey Barbeque Sauce (see index) or store-bought barbeque sauce.

Yield: 12-15 chicken strips. Serves: 4

Options: This dish can be made easily if you use pre-made Crispy Coating (see index). Use 1-1/2 cups of the Crispy Coating to replace the bread crumbs, wheat germ, seasonings, and Parmesan cheese in this recipe.

For **Coconut Chicken Fingers**: Decrease bread crumbs to 3/4 cup. Add 3/4 cup flaked coconut, 1/2 teaspoon curry powder, and a dash of cayenne pepper. Serve with Apricot-Dijon Dipping Sauce (see index).

For **Crispy Shrimp**: Replace the chicken with 1 pound small shrimp, omit soaking in the buttermilk and reduce baking time to 5 minutes.

TIP: Japanese style coarse-ground Panko bread crumbs are great for fillers and breading because they tend to stay crispy longer and absorb less grease than regular bread crumbs. Substitute with regular bread crumbs if you don't have Panko bread crumbs.