

Easy Crispy Chicken Sandwiches and Nuggets

Frozen breaded chicken can be convenient, but it rarely matches the flavor and texture of homemade. These oven-baked chicken cutlets are coated in seasoned crushed cornflakes, creating a crispy exterior without the need for deep-frying. Serve them on toasted buns with lettuce, cucumber, and tangy chicken sauce, or cut the chicken into smaller pieces to make nuggets. I first discovered crispy chicken sandwiches in the United States, and they quickly became one of my favorite comfort foods. This oven-baked version makes them easy to prepare at home.

INGREDIENTS

2 ounces (57 g) cornflakes
2 teaspoons hot paprika
2 teaspoons onion powder or granulated onion
1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 chicken breast
1 to 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 sandwich bun or brioche bun, preferably whole grain
Mayonnaise
Lettuce
Thinly sliced cucumber
American cheese slices, optional

CHALLENGES AND TRICKS

Fried chicken is usually coated in seasoned flour, breading, or batter before it is deep-fried. Battering and double-dredging are common techniques for American-style fried chicken.

The hard part about making chicken in the oven is getting a crisp crust in the short time it takes to cook the chicken pieces through. One solution is to start with an ingredient that's already crispy. Crushed cornflakes brown quickly and create a crunchier texture than ordinary breadcrumbs.

Salt: crust, barbecue sauce

Sweet: chicken, mayonnaise, coleslaw dressing, barbecue sauce

Sour: coleslaw dressing, barbecue sauce

Bitter: mustard

Umami: chicken, onion powder, garlic powder, barbecue sauce

Fat: coleslaw dressing, mayonnaise

PREPARATION

First, prepare the sauce. Use the Chick-fil-A®-style sauce below, or substitute the Raising Cane's®-style sauce at the end. See copycat chicken sauce recipes at the end.

Stir together the coleslaw dressing, barbecue sauce, and mustard until smooth. The amounts in the ingredient list follow this ratio and make about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (2 dl) chicken sauce, but you can always adjust it depending on how strong the barbecue sauce is. If the sauce tastes too tangy, stir in a little mayonnaise to mellow the flavor.



Now prepare the coating. Place the cornflakes in a resealable plastic bag and crush them into coarse crumbs. A few larger pieces are fine, but most of it should be crushed into small pieces.



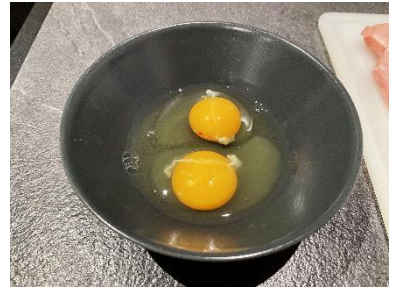
Add the paprika, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, and cayenne, and mix thoroughly. Adjust the seasonings to taste, or substitute your favorite seasoning blend. Mix well, then stir the coating again just before breading the chicken so the seasonings remain evenly distributed.



Slice the chicken breast horizontally into 2 to 3 thin cutlets. If needed, cover them with plastic wrap and pound them to an even thickness.



Lightly beat 1 to 2 eggs with a fork, and then you are ready to bread the chicken fillets.



Set everything up like an assembly line, and preheat a oven to 400°F (200°C).



Dip the chicken fillets in the egg mixture and then gently coat them in the crumb mixture, making sure the surface is well covered. You can spray them with a little oil for extra crunch.



Bake for 8 to 9 minutes per side, or until the coating is crisp and the thickest part of the chicken reaches at least 165°F on an instant-read thermometer. While they bake, prepare a few lettuce leaves and slice some fresh cucumber. The lettuce and cucumber add freshness and crunch, but you can substitute pickles, tomato, or thinly sliced onion.

During the final 5 minutes of baking, toast the cut sides of the buns. Toasting the cut sides helps prevent the sauce from soaking into the buns while keeping the exterior soft. You can also add a slice of American cheese to the chicken fillets if you like.

When the chicken fillets are ready, assemble the crispy chicken sandwiches.



Spread mayonnaise on the bottom bun and the chicken sauce on the top bun. Add lettuce to the bottom and cucumber to the top, then place the crispy chicken fillet in the middle and close the sandwich.



To make nuggets instead, simply cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces before breading. The oven time will typically be about 7-8 minutes per side. Serve the nuggets as an appetizer or pair them with a green salad, coleslaw, or fries.



Chick-fil-A®-Style Sauce

INGREDIENTS

- 8 tablespoons coleslaw dressing
- 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce
- 1 tablespoon American yellow mustard

Raising Cane's®-Style Sauce

INGREDIENTS

- 12 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- 5 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- ½ to 1 tablespoon hot sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon celery salt



Photo: Crispy chicken sandwich with no deep-frying!