Nashville Hot Chicken Recipes

Crisp chicken cutlets finished with a fresh cayenne spice oil you can adjust to taste.

PREP	COOK	ADDITIONAL	TOTAL	YIELD	LEVEL
25 min	20 min	35 min	80 min	4 servings	Medium



Ingredients

Measured for 4 servings

- 1 1/2 lb (680 g) boneless skinless chicken breast
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
- 3/4 tsp (4 g) salt
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) buttermilk
- 1 cup (120 g) flour
- 1/4 cup (30 g) cornstarch
- 1 tsp (2 g) paprika
- 1/2 tsp (1.5 g) garlic powder
- 1–2 tsp (2–4 g) cayenne pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp (4 g) brown sugar
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) additional neutral frying oil
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) fresh neutral oil for the spice coating

FOOD-SAFETY CHECK

Check the thickest chicken piece with a food thermometer; it must reach 165°F (74°C). Keep raw chicken and its utensils separate from ready-to-eat food.

Times include hands-on preparation and the listed rest; pan size and piece size affect cooking speed.

From prep to plate

Five distinct photos follow the measured stages and sequence below.



01 INGREDIENTS



02 PREP



03 PAN-FRY



04 SPICE OIL



05 SERVE

Method

1. Cut chicken into four even 1/2-inch cutlets. Refrigerate in buttermilk with half the salt and pepper for 30 minutes.
2. Mix flour, cornstarch, remaining salt and pepper and half the paprika and garlic powder.
3. Drain cutlets, coat firmly in flour mixture and discard used buttermilk and crumbs.
4. Heat additional frying oil and the base oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat to about 350°F (175°C). Fry in batches 4–6 minutes per side, adjusting heat to avoid scorching.
5. Check every center reaches 165°F (74°C). Drain on a clean rack. Warm the 2 tbsp fresh coating oil separately over low heat, remove from heat and stir in cayenne, sugar and remaining paprika and garlic powder.
6. Brush the warm spice oil lightly over cooked chicken and rest 5 minutes before serving.

COOKING NOTES, VARIATIONS & LEFTOVERS

TIPS
Use fresh oil for the coating rather than handling a pan of very hot used frying oil. Cayenne varies in heat; begin with the smaller amount. Measure ingredients before starting and keep raw-poultry utensils separate from cooked food. Use the thermometer target in the instructions rather than relying only on color.

VARIATIONS
Milder: use 1/4 tsp cayenne and extra sweet paprika. Smoky: use smoked paprika. Thigh: use boneless evenly thick thighs and check their centers.

AVOID
Skipping the recipe-specific preparation and thickness guidance. Crowding the pan or tray so food cooks unevenly. Judging doneness only by color or time instead of a thermometer.

SERVE
Serve with bread, pickles and coleslaw.

STORAGE & FREEZING
Refrigerate promptly in shallow covered containers within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C). Keep at 40°F (4°C) or below and use within 3–4 days, counting any earlier storage of cooked chicken used in the recipe. Freeze in airtight portions for up to 2 months for best quality. Thaw in the refrigerator.

REHEAT
Reheat on a rack at 375°F (190°C) until the chicken center reaches 165°F (74°C).

QUICK FAQ
How hot is this recipe?: One to two teaspoons of cayenne gives noticeable heat; start lower if needed.
Why is the coating dark but chicken raw?: The oil is too hot or the cutlet is too thick.
Can I omit sugar?: Yes, the spice oil will taste less sweet.