

Korean Fried Chicken

BY CHRIS JOE | @CJ.EATS_

Korean Fried Chicken has a famous origin story that has never been 100% proven but has stuck: it's said that during the Korean War, American soldiers who were stationed in Korea had no turkey for Thanksgiving, so they fried chicken instead and shared it with their Korean counterparts. Decades later, it's one of the most popular and famous dishes, not only in Korean but in America, as well. While we may never know if this is true, one thing we know for sure: Korean Fried Chicken exists because of the connection between American and Korean cultures.

I love that it's neither purely American nor Korean—inspired by American-style fried chicken but refined with Korean techniques and flavor profiles, it's something that is uniquely it's own. Asian American food is this—constantly evolving and changing through history as it pushes culture forward. I love that one of my favorite foods comes full circle around Thanksgiving—one of the most American holidays. I think this will resonate with my audience as they love fried chicken recipes—so much that I had to include this recipe in my cookbook!

Recipe by Chris Joe, from Cook Asian

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SERVES: 4 **PREP TIME:** 1 hour **COOK TIME:** 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

For marinating the chicken

2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs
2 tsp ground white pepper
1 ½ tsp kosher salt
1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp garlic powder

For coating the sauce (Pick the sauce of your choice)

Spicy Gochujang Sauce

1 cup soy sauce
½ cup water
½ cup packed (light or dark) brown sugar
¼ cup honey
¼ cup rice vinegar
¼ cup gochujang
1 tbsp gochugaru
5 garlic cloves, grated

Honey Butter Sauce

½ cup water
8 tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter
½ cup honey
½ cup sugar
½ cup soy sauce
1 tsp kosher salt

Soy Garlic Sauce

1 cup soy sauce
½ cup water
½ cup packed (light or dark) brown sugar
2 tbsp neutral-flavored oil
2 tbsp distilled white vinegar
8 dried red chilies (such as arbol or Japones)
5 garlic cloves, grated

Ingredients and recipe continue...

INSTRUCTIONS

01 Make the chicken

In a large bowl, toss the chicken with the white pepper, salt, onion powder, garlic powder, ground ginger, and gochugaru until evenly coated. Set aside to marinate for 15 minutes.

02 Make the coating sauce of your choice

In a small saucepan, combine the ingredients for the sauce of your choice and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes, until it has thickened. Turn off the heat and set aside.

03 Make the wet batter

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, eggs, and cold water until the batter is smooth.

04 Make the frying mix

In a separate large bowl, combine the rice flour, cornstarch, all-purpose flour, baking powder, salt, white pepper, black pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and ground ginger. Add 3 to 4 tablespoons of water to the mixture and rub it in with your hands to form a shaggy mixture that will give extra texture to the chicken.

05 Prepare the oil and chicken

Fill a large, heavy-bottomed pot with at least 3 inches of oil and heat over medium-high heat until the oil reaches 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper for the dredged chicken. Place a wire rack inside a second baking sheet or line the baking sheet with paper towels to drain the fried chicken.

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For the wet batter

¾ cup all-purpose flour
2 large eggs
1 cup cold water

For the frying mix

1 ½ cups rice flour
1 ½ cups cornstarch
¾ cup all-purpose flour
2 tbsp baking powder
1 tbsp kosher salt
1 tbsp ground white pepper
1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp ground ginger

For frying the chicken

2 to 3 quarts neutral-flavored oil

For serving

1 ½ tsp toasted seasme seeds
2 scallions, thinly sliced (white and green parts)

06 Working with a few at a time, dip the chicken thighs in the wet batter and let any excess drip off. Put the chicken thighs in the bowl with the frying mix and turn to coat each piece, pressing the frying mix into the batter on the chicken until the thigh is fully coated. Place each thigh on the parchment-lined baking sheet and repeat the process until all of the thighs are coated.

07 Fry the chicken

Gently add a few of the chicken thighs to the oil one at a time, making sure not to overcrowd the pot, and fry them for about 4 minutes, until light golden brown, adjusting the heat as needed to maintain an oil temperature of 350°F. Use a spider strainer or tongs to transfer the fried chicken to the wire rack or paper towels to drain (remove any pieces of batter floating in the oil with a fine-mesh strainer). Return the oil to 350°F. Add a few more chicken thighs and fry them in the same way, adding them to the baking sheet to drain. Repeat until you have fried all the thighs.

08 Return the oil to 350°F. Return all the chicken thighs to the oil at once and fry for 2 to 3 minutes, until deep brown and crunchy. Use the strainer or tongs to remove the chicken thighs from the oil and return them to the paper towels to drain. Turn off the heat.

07 Serve

Place the chicken in a large wide bowl. Reheat your chosen sauce over medium heat. Drizzle the sauce over and around the chicken and toss to coat. Transfer the chicken to a platter and garnish with the sesame seeds and scallions. Enjoy!