Honey, I Fried the Chicken Sandwich

Brown-Butter Hot-Honey Chicken

FREE RECIPE | DINNER | 4 sandwiches



Spicy double-dipped fried chicken thigh with pepper jack, roasted-garlic brown-sugar bacon, pickled peppers, red onion, lettuce, pickles, Brown-Butter Hot Honey, and Smoked Blue Cheese.

Recipe & original photography by Brown Butter & Black Magic.

Ingredients

Spicy marinade

- 4 boneless skinless chicken thighs, about 1 1/2 lb total, trimmed and flattened to an even thickness
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1/3 cup pickle or pickled-pepper brine
- 1/2 cup liquid egg whites
- 1 tbsp hot sauce
- 1 tbsp adobo seasoning
- 1 tsp each garlic powder and onion powder
- 1/2 tsp each smoked paprika and black pepper
- 1/4 tsp celery salt
- 1 tbsp liquid smoke
- 1 tbsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp browning sauce

Spicy craggy dredge

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 tbsp powdered sugar
- 2 tsp paprika
- 1 tbsp each garlic powder and onion powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp each adobo seasoning and black pepper
- 1 tbsp each white pepper, celery salt, ground thyme, and ground oregano
- 1/4 tsp cayenne
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp prepared Nashville hot-chicken seasoning or rub, brand of choice
- 3 tbsp clean reserved marinade

Brown-Butter Hot Honey

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1-2 tbsp hot sauce
- 1/2 tsp red-pepper flakes
- 1 tsp apple-cider vinegar

Smoked Blue Cheese

- 1/2 cup blue-cheese dressing
- 1 tbsp mayonnaise or sour cream
- 1 tsp pickle or pepper brine
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp hot sauce

Frying and assembly

- Peanut, canola, or vegetable oil, enough to reach the deep fryer's indicated MIN/MAX fill level
- 8 bacon slices
- 1 tbsp prepared roasted-garlic brown-sugar seasoning blend, brand of choice
- 4 brioche buns
- 2 tbsp softened butter
- 4 pepper-jack slices
- 16 dill-pickle chips, dried
- 1/2 cup drained pickled peppers
- 1 1/2 cups shredded lettuce
- 1/4 cup thin red onion

Make it

1. Trim 4 boneless skinless chicken thighs (about 1 1/2 lb total) and flatten any thick sections to an even 1/2-3/4 inch.

2. Whisk 1 1/2 cups buttermilk; 1/3 cup pickle or pickled-pepper brine; 1/2 cup liquid egg whites; 1 tbsp hot sauce; 1 tbsp adobo seasoning; 1 tsp each garlic powder and onion powder; 1/2 tsp each smoked paprika and black pepper; 1/4 tsp celery salt; 1 tbsp liquid smoke; 1 tbsp cayenne pepper; 1 tbsp browning sauce. Before adding raw chicken, reserve 3 tbsp in a clean covered bowl. Add the 4 thighs to the remaining marinade; refrigerate 4-12 hours.

3. Rub 8 bacon slices with 1 tbsp prepared roasted-garlic brown-sugar seasoning blend, brand of choice. Cook until crisp; drain.

4. Brown 2 tbsp unsalted butter over medium heat for 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat; carefully stir in 1/3 cup honey, 1-2 tbsp hot sauce, 1/2 tsp red-pepper flakes, and 1 tsp apple-cider vinegar. Do not add salt. Before glazing, microwave in a microwave-safe vessel for 1 minute, pausing if it threatens to boil over; stir well.

5. Whisk 1/2 cup blue-cheese dressing; 1 tbsp mayonnaise or sour cream; 1 tsp pickle or pepper brine; 1/2 tsp smoked paprika; 1/4 tsp garlic powder; 1/2 tsp hot sauce. Chill.

6. Whisk 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour; 1/2 cup cornstarch; 1 tbsp powdered sugar; 2 tsp paprika; 1 tbsp each garlic powder and onion powder; 1 tsp baking powder; 1 tbsp each adobo seasoning and black pepper; 1 tbsp each white pepper, celery salt, ground thyme, and ground oregano; 1/4 tsp cayenne; 1 tbsp chili powder; 1 tbsp prepared Nashville hot-chicken seasoning or rub, brand of choice. Drizzle in the 3 tbsp clean reserved marinade, tossing and pinching to create small flour clumps.

7. Double-dip each thigh: marinade, dredge, marinade again, then dredge again, pressing firmly and packing on the clumps. Rest on a rack for 15 minutes.

8. Spread 2 tbsp softened butter over 4 brioche buns and toast cut-side down 1-2 minutes; transfer to a rack.

9. Preheat the deep fryer. Fill the fryer with peanut, canola, or vegetable oil only to its indicated fill line. Preheat to 350°F following the manufacturer's directions. Set a clean wire rack over a sheet pan beside the fryer.

10. Load without crowding. Place 1 thigh in the raised basket. Lower the basket slowly over 5-7 seconds. If the fryer manual permits food to be lowered into an already-submerged basket, carefully ease it into the oil with long tongs, moving away from your body, to reduce sticking.

11. Deep-fry. Fry thighs individually at 350°F for 7 minutes, until deeply golden, crisp, and 165°F internally. A substantially larger thigh may need up to 3 additional minutes; confirm with a thermometer. Turn once halfway through only if the chicken is not completely submerged.

12. Drain, glaze, and cheese. Raise the basket and let the chicken drain over the fryer for 20-30 seconds. Transfer immediately to the wire rack; do not leave it sitting in the basket. Brush each thigh with 1-1 1/2 tbsp warm Brown-Butter Hot Honey, top with 1 pepper-jack slice per thigh (4 slices total), and loosely tent for 30-45 seconds. Skim loose crumbs and allow the oil to recover fully to 350°F before the next batch.

13. Build 4 sandwiches: Smoked Blue Cheese sauce, shredded lettuce (1 1/2 cups total), chicken, 2 bacon strips each, dill pickles (16 chips total), drained pickled peppers (1/2 cup total), thin red onion (1/4 cup total), more Smoked Blue Cheese sauce, and top bun. Serve remaining Brown-Butter Hot Honey in a dip cup.

Short hold for a shared fry service

Fry the chicken first and hold unsauced on a wire rack in a 200°F oven for no more than 10-15 minutes. Confirm the chicken stays at or above 140°F. Skim crumbs from the oil, return it to the temperature required for your fries, and finish those last. Then glaze the chicken, add cheese, and assemble.

Equipment & safe service

Heavy-pot frying alternative

Use a dry, deep, heavy pot or Dutch oven on a stable burner with a clip-on frying thermometer. Add peanut, canola, or vegetable oil sufficient to submerge one thigh, keeping the pot no more than half full and leaving ample room for bubbling and displacement. If one thigh cannot fit safely, use a larger pot. Heat uncovered to 350°F; monitor and adjust the burner to maintain that temperature. Lower one coated thigh slowly away from you with long tongs. Fry individually for the 7 minutes at 350°F; a substantially larger piece may need up to 3 additional minutes. Confirm 165°F in the thickest part; continue cooking if needed. Turn once halfway through only if not fully submerged. Lift with tongs or a spider, drain 20-30 seconds, then transfer to a clean wire rack. Skim crumbs and restore 350°F before the next thigh. Follow the recipe's cheese, glaze and assembly steps. Keep water away from hot oil. Never leave frying unattended or move a pot of hot oil. Keep a fitting lid nearby; never use water on an oil fire. Let oil cool completely before handling. For an electric deep fryer, follow the manufacturer's fill limits and operating instructions.

Storage & reheating

Keep raw meat and perishable sauces refrigerated at 40°F or below; marinate chicken in the refrigerator. Reserve the clean marinade before raw chicken touches it. Discard raw-meat marinade and contaminated dredge. Use separate clean tools and plates for cooked food. Serve promptly; refrigerate perishables within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F. Reheat leftovers to 165°F. For the optional 200°F oven hold of no more than 10-15 minutes, verify that the chicken stays at or above 140°F. Oven setting alone does not establish food temperature.

Allergen information

Contains milk, wheat, and egg. Prepared rubs, dressings, sauces, buns and brines vary; check labels for soy, fish, sesame and other allergens. Peanut oil is one listed frying option; choose oil appropriate to your guests' allergies.

Food-safety temperatures: FoodSafety.gov, Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures.