The Dill or No Dill Chicken Sandwich

Classic Buttermilk-Pickle Fried Chicken

FREE RECIPE | DINNER | 4 sandwiches



Double-dipped craggy fried chicken thigh, Colby Jack, shredded lettuce, red onion, dill pickles, and Honeyed Alibi Sauce on brioche.

Recipe & original photography by Brown Butter & Black Magic.

Ingredients

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 dill-pickle 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

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

Honeyed Alibi Sauce

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp each Dijon and honey
- 2 tsp pickle brine
- 1 tsp hot sauce
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp smoked paprika

Frying and assembly

- Peanut, canola, or vegetable oil, enough to reach the deep fryer's indicated MIN/MAX fill level
- 4 brioche buns
- 2 tbsp softened butter
- 4 Colby Jack slices
- 16-20 dill-pickle chips, dried
- 1 1/2 cups shredded lettuce
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced 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. Keep each piece slightly larger than its bun.

2. Whisk 1 1/2 cups buttermilk; 1/3 cup dill-pickle 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. Whisk 1/2 cup mayonnaise; 1 tbsp each Dijon and honey; 2 tsp pickle brine; 1 tsp hot sauce; 1/2 tsp garlic powder; 1/4 tsp smoked paprika. Chill.

4. 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.

5. 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 so the coating hydrates and grips the meat.

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

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

8. Load without crowding. Place 1 thigh in the raised basket. Lower the basket slowly over 5-7 seconds to prevent the coating from sloughing off and the oil from surging. If your fryer's manual permits food to be lowered into an already-submerged basket, use long tongs to ease it away from you; this helps prevent the crust from bonding to the wire.

9. Deep-fry. Fry thighs individually at 350°F for 7 minutes, until deeply golden, crisp, and 165°F at the thickest point. A substantially larger piece may need up to 3 additional minutes; use temperature, not color alone, to decide. If a piece is not fully submerged, carefully turn it once halfway through.

10. Drain and recover. Raise the basket and drain over the fryer for 20-30 seconds, then move the chicken immediately to the wire rack. Taste before adding any finishing adobo. Add 1 Colby Jack slice per thigh (4 slices total) while hot and loosely tent for 30-45 seconds. Skim loose breading from the oil and let the fryer return fully to 350°F before starting the next batch.

11. Build 4 sandwiches: Honeyed Alibi Sauce, shredded lettuce (1 1/2 cups total), chicken, dill pickles (16-20 chips total), thinly sliced red onion (1/4 cup total), more sauce, and top bun.

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 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.

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.