

Homemade Chicken Nuggets

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Recipe by Our Best Bites

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts

3/4 cup dill pickle juice

3/4 cup buttermilk

Tabasco sauce

kosher salt

freshly ground black pepper

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 tablespoon onion powder

1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder

1 teaspoon paprika

3 egg whites

1 tablespoon water

1 1/2 cups unseasoned panko bread crumbs

Peanut oil (or other oil with a very high smoke point like canola, although canola can impart a fishy flavor when cooked at very high temperatures)

Instructions:

Cut the chicken breasts into bite-sized pieces. In a gallon-sized Ziploc bag, combine pickle juice, buttermilk, and about 10 dashes of Tabasco sauce. Add the chicken and seal the bag, then refrigerate it for 1-4 hours.

When ready to cook, whisk together 1 teaspoon black pepper, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, the flour, baking soda, onion powder, garlic powder, and paprika in a shallow bowl. In another shallow bowl, whisk together the egg whites and water. Add the bread crumbs to a third shallow bowl. Begin heating about 2 inches of peanut oil in a heavy pot (keep an eye on it...a grease fire will ruin your day).

Place a handful of chicken pieces into the flour and toss to coat (you can also coat them all at once by combining the chicken and the flour mixture in a large Ziploc bag and shaking to coat). Roll the chicken in the egg whites, then roll to coat in the Panko. Repeat with remaining chicken pieces. I find it works best when I use one hand to do the flour/egg part and the other hand for the bread crumbs—it kind of keeps the mess to a minimum.

Preheat oven to the lowest setting.

When the oil reaches 350 degrees, place 1/3-1/2 of the coated chicken pieces in the pan and cook, stirring gently and frequently, until golden brown (about 3-5 minutes; use an instant read thermometer to check them if you're nervous; the nuggets should be at least 165 degrees F in the center). Place the cooked chicken in the heated oven (or serve, if you have hungry little monkeys hanging around the kitchen) and repeat with the remaining chicken. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

