

MY HUSBAND COOKS:

A TASTY LOOK AT THE FOOD HE MAKES AND I EAT.

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Originally Posted: January 5, 2007

Pistachio Fried Chicken

Yield: 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

One 3 lb. to 4 lb. whole chicken or chicken pieces with skin on
Canola, peanut or vegetable oil to fry

Crust:

1 cup shelled, unsalted pistachios
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt (skip if using salted nuts)

Egg wash:

3 large eggs
1/3 cup buttermilk (regular milk can be substituted)
Hot sauce (optional)

Directions:

1. It's butchering time. Carefully remove the legs, thighs, breast and wings. Do this by running the blade of your knife along the crevices of the bird and circling its joints. After you have cut the meat to the bone, you want to "pop" them out of joint and cut them free. Use a good pair of kitchen shears or a cleaver to remove the breast meat. You want to keep the bone on the back of the breast to keep it all together while cooking. Butchering a bird is not easy to describe in mere words. But go slow and steady and eventually the bird will come in pieces. If you want to skip this step, feel free to buy skin-on pieces from the market.

2. On a cutting board or large plate, lay out the chicken pieces. Salt and pepper them liberally and allow them to sit for 15-30 min. You want the pieces to be close to room temperature when cooked. You can, however, do this step in advance and simply cover and refrigerate for hours or overnight and come back to it later.

3. Time to make pistachio flour -- or at least our version of it. Using a food processor, take 1 cup of shelled pistachios and pulverize for at least 1 min. steady. The goal is to get a powdery substance. It might start to ball a bit from the fat and moisture in the nuts. Most important is to achieve small grains. Now add the flour, baking powder and salt. Process again for another 20 seconds. The result should be a very fine powder. Place mixture in a large zip-top bag.

4. Add the egg wash ingredients to a bowl and whisk together. Dredge the chicken pieces through the mix and then add the parts to the bag with the pistachio flour. Shake the bag

vigorously to coat the chicken. Carefully remove the chicken pieces from the bag and lay out on a clean cutting board or plate.

NOTE: You may need to coat the chicken in batches.

5. While the coated chicken is resting, in a large pan or, even better, a cast iron skillet, add enough oil to be fill the pan about halfway. Do not go past halfway. You are going to fry, so it is extremely important that you are careful to not let the oil overflow (remember displacement and bubbling!). Turn the heat to high and allow it to heat for about 4-6 min. You are aiming for about 325F, or when a few drops of water sizzle when they hit the oil.

WARNING: It's important you are very careful from now on. You shouldn't do this with small children running around or yippee-type dogs at your feet or cats known to rub up against you in a sneak attack. Frying is great, but people can get hurt if we don't make sure everyone's aware that it's going on. So go slow. This means laying the food down in the oil and only letting it go once it's in the oil. You do not want to splash. Remember, it hurts to get burned! Now that I've been a good guy, back to the fun part!

6. Once the oil is hot, slowly add the legs and thighs (dark meat) with meat side down. There will be a lot of bubbling – but that's a sign things are going right. Cook for 2 min. and then add the breast meat with meat side down, and the wings. Cook for another 1 min. and now lower the heat to medium or medium high. Continue to cook for another 5 min, for a total of 8 minutes on this side. Turn the meat over using a pair of tongs. Cook on the other side for another 6 min.

NOTE: If you can't get them all in one batch it's OK. The oil will be good for cooking, it will just be darker.

7. While the chicken is cooking on the second side, set up a place for it to drain (e.g. a plate with paper towels or an upside down rack over newsprint). This will help wick away the excess oil.

8. Remove the chicken from the oil and allow it to drain. The temperature on the bird should be close to 160F. If you don't have a thermometer, the color on the chicken should be slightly darker than what you see at popular fried chicken places, but not burnt. Let rest for at least 10 min. Serve hot or cold. Enjoy!