



## Chicken Nuggets

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**WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Some Chicken Nuggets recipes took the least desirable parts of the chicken and put them through a grinder. We opted for skinless, boneless chicken breasts so we would know exactly which parts of the chicken we were eating. Brining the chicken prevented it from drying out, and seasoning the breast meat combated its inherently bland flavor. We cut the brining time in half by slicing the meat into nuggets beforehand.

Ground-up panko (Japanese-style bread crumbs) combined with flour and a pinch of baking soda provided a crispy brown exterior for our nuggets. Using whole eggs to adhere the coating made the nuggets too eggy, but the whites alone didn't have as much binding power. We found that resting the nuggets before frying solved the problem.

### Serves 4 to 6

*Don't brine the chicken longer than 30 minutes or it will be too salty. To crush the panko, place it inside a zipper-lock bag and lightly beat it with a rolling pin. This recipe doubles easily and freezes well.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 1/2 pounds)
- 2 cups water
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs, crushed
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 3/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 3 large egg whites
- 4 cups peanut or vegetable oil

### INSTRUCTIONS

**1. CUT AND BRINE** Following photos 1 to 3 (at left), cut each chicken breast diagonally into thirds, then cut each third diagonally into 1/2-inch-thick pieces. Whisk water, tablespoon salt, and Worcestershire in large bowl until salt dissolves. Add chicken pieces and refrigerate, covered, for 30 minutes.

**2. COAT CHICKEN** Remove chicken from brine, discard brine, and pat chicken dry with paper towels. Combine flour, bread crumbs, onion powder, remaining salt, pepper, garlic powder, and baking soda in shallow dish. Whisk egg whites in second shallow dish until foamy. Coat half of chicken with egg whites and dredge in flour-crumbs mixture, pressing gently to adhere.

Transfer to plate and repeat with remaining chicken (don't discard flour-crumb mixture). Let sit 10 minutes.

**3. FRY** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 200 degrees. Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat to 350 degrees. Return chicken to flour dish and turn to coat, pressing flour-crumb mixture gently to adhere. Fry half of chicken until deep golden brown, about 3 minutes, turning halfway through cooking. Drain chicken on wire rack set inside rimmed baking sheet and place in oven. Return oil to 350 degrees and repeat with remaining chicken. Serve with dipping sauces (see related recipes.)

**MAKE AHEAD:** Cool fried nuggets, transfer to zipper-lock bag, and freeze for up to 1 month. To serve, adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Place nuggets on rimmed baking sheet and bake, flipping once, until heated through, about 15 minutes.

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#### CUTTING NUGGETS

Many recipes require pounding the breasts to an even thickness before cutting them into nuggets. We found a way to skip the pounding and still get nuggets of equal size.

1. Using a chef's knife, cut each chicken breast on the bias into thirds.



2. Working with the largest piece, turn the cut end toward you and slice into 1/2-inch-thick pieces.



3. With your knife almost parallel to the cutting board, cut the two smaller thirds into pieces.



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