



CRISPY SICHUAN-CHILI CHICKEN

1 HOUR

Coating the chicken with cornstarch and egg whites—rather than a more traditional flour-based batter—keeps Sichuan dry-fried chicken feeling light despite being deep-fried. To toast the Sichuan peppercorns, heat them in a small skillet over medium and cook, shaking the

pan frequently, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and let cool, then finely grind in a spice grinder. To remove any large, fibrous bits, sift the ground pepper through a mesh strainer. You can control the spiciness of the dish by drizzling more or less of the Sichuan chili oil on the chicken.

Don't marinate the chicken longer than 30 minutes or it will be too salty.

INGREDIENTS

½	CUP SOY SAUCE OR TAMARI
3	TABLESPOONS UNSEASONED RICE VINEGAR
4	TABLESPOONS WHITE SUGAR, DIVIDED
2	LARGE EGG WHITES, LIGHTLY BEATEN
2	POUNDS BONELESS, SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS, TRIMMED AND CUT INTO 1-INCH PIECES
2	CUPS CORNSTARCH
¼	CUP SICHUAN PEPPERCORNS, TOASTED AND FINELY GROUND
2	TEASPOONS KOSHER SALT
2	QUARTS PEANUT OIL
8	SCALLIONS, THINLY SLICED
1	CUP FRESH CILANTRO LEAVES
6	TABLESPOONS SICHUAN CHILI OIL, PLUS EXTRA TO SERVE
1	TABLESPOON SICHUAN SEASONING SALT, PLUS EXTRA TO SERVE

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine the soy sauce, vinegar, 2 tablespoons of the sugar and the egg whites. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Add the chicken and stir to coat, then cover and let marinate at room temperature for 20 to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, set a wire rack in a rimmed baking sheet. In a large bowl, stir together the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar, the cornstarch, Sichuan pepper and salt.

Drain the chicken in a colander. Add ½ of the chicken to the cornstarch mixture and toss to coat completely, pressing the pieces into the cornstarch to make it adhere. Transfer the coated chicken to a mesh strainer and shake to remove excess cornstarch. Transfer to the prepared rack in a single layer. Repeat with the remaining chicken and cornstarch mixture.

Set a second wire rack in a rimmed baking sheet. In a large Dutch oven over medium-high, heat the peanut oil to 350°F. Add half of the coated chicken and cook, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, until well browned, about 5 minutes. Using slotted spoon or wire skimmer, transfer the chicken to the second rack. Allow the oil to return to 350°F, then repeat with the remaining chicken.

In a small microwave-safe bowl or glass measuring cup, microwave the Sichuan chili oil on high until just warm, about 30 seconds. Combine the hot fried chicken and scallions in a large bowl, sprinkle with the Sichuan seasoning salt and drizzle with the warm chili oil, then toss to coat. Add the cilantro and toss again, then transfer to a platter. Serve, passing additional chili oil and seasoning salt at the table.