

Crispy Chicken Recipe

Ingredients: Serves 6

One 3 to 3¼ lb chicken
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons salt
3 pieces eight-star anise
One 1 by 2-inch piece dried tangerine peel
Three 2-inch cinnamon sticks
One ½-inch-thick slice fresh ginger, lightly smashed
8½ cups cold water
½ cup Chinese white rice wine or gin
1 whole nutmeg

For the coating:

1 teaspoon maltose or honey, melted with 2 tablespoons boiling water
1 teaspoon Shao-Hsing wine or dry sherry
1 teaspoon Chinese white rice vinegar or distilled vinegar
½ teaspoon cornstarch
6 cups peanut oil
Sichuan Peppercorn Salt for serving

Method:

Clean the chicken inside and out and remove the fat and membranes. Wash under cold running water and drain. Sprinkle ¼ cup of the salt on the outside of the chicken, rub well, rinse, and drain well. Place the chicken in a strainer and let drain for an hour. Combine all the other ingredients, including the remaining 2 tablespoons salt, except coating ingredients, in a large oval Dutch oven, and bring to a boil over high heat. Cover, lower the heat, and simmer for 30 minutes. Turn the heat back to high and return to a boil. Place the chicken in the pot, breast side up. Cover. When the liquid begins to boil, lower the heat immediately and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes. Turn the chicken over and repeat, cooking for 10 to 12 minutes more. Turn off the heat and allow the chicken to rest in the liquid for 10 minutes. Remove and discard all the other ingredients in the pot. Allow the chicken to drain and pierce it with a cooking fork to help the draining process. In a small bowl, combine the coating ingredients. With a pastry brush, coat the chicken thoroughly with the coating mixture. Allow the chicken to dry thoroughly, about 6 hours. (The use of an electric fan can reduce this by half). Heat a wok over high heat for 1 minute. Add the peanut oil and heat to 350°F to 375°F. Place the chicken, breast side up, in a large Chinese strainer, lower into the oil, and fry for 4 minutes, ladling hot oil over it as it fries. The chicken should be golden brown. Turn off the heat. Remove the chicken with a strainer and drain well over a bowl. Allow to rest for 7 minutes. To serve, chop into bite-sized pieces and serve with Sichuan peppercorn salt.