

Introduction

Baked Sweet and Sour Chicken is a delightful dish that marries the tangy sweetness of pineapple with the savory flavor of chicken, creating an explosion of tastes that will leave your taste buds dancing. This dish is not only a feast for the palate but also a visual delight. Bright colors from bell peppers, onions, and pineapple make it an appealing centerpiece for any meal. Whether you are preparing dinner for your family or hosting friends, this recipe is sure to become a favorite.

This dish is a fantastic alternative to takeout, allowing you to enjoy the flavors of sweet and sour chicken at home without the added calories and preservatives often found in restaurant offerings. The baking method keeps the chicken moist while allowing the sauce to infuse the meat with flavor, resulting in tender bites that are simply scrumptious. Plus, it's easy to prepare and requires only a handful of common ingredients.

In this article, we'll explore the necessary ingredients, detailed preparation steps, cooking techniques, and tips to ensure your Baked Sweet and Sour Chicken turns out perfectly every time. If you're dreaming of a comforting yet exotic meal, grab your apron, and let's get started!

Detailed Ingredients

Chicken Breasts: 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into cubes. The chicken is the star of this dish, and using boneless, skinless chicken keeps it lean while still providing the protein needed for a hearty meal.

Cornstarch: 1/3 cup. This ingredient helps to create a crispy coating around the chicken when it's sautéed before baking, providing a delightful texture.

Garlic Powder: 1/2 teaspoon. Adding garlic powder enhances the flavor profile, creating a savory base that complements the sweetness of the sauce.

Salt: 1/2 teaspoon. A fundamental seasoning that brings out the flavors in both the chicken and the sauce.

Black Pepper: 1/4 teaspoon. This adds a little heat and depth to the dish, balancing the sweet and sour components.

Olive Oil: 2 tablespoons. Used for sautéing the chicken, olive oil also adds a rich flavor and

helps achieve that beautiful golden-brown color.

Pineapple Juice: 1/2 cup. This ingredient is crucial for the sweet and sour sauce, contributing to both the sweetness and acidity that defines this dish.

Ketchup: 1/2 cup. Ketchup adds a tangy sweetness to the sauce, giving it the distinctive flavor that sweet and sour chicken is known for.

Brown Sugar: 1/4 cup. This ingredient provides richness and additional sweetness, enhancing the overall taste of the dish.

Apple Cider Vinegar: 2 tablespoons. This tangy addition helps balance the sweetness and rounds out the flavor of the sauce.

Diced Onion: 1/4 cup. Onion contributes a savory, slightly sweet flavor that complements the other ingredients.

Diced Bell Pepper: 1/4 cup. This adds both color and a subtle crunch to the dish, enhancing the overall texture.

Diced Pineapple: 1/4 cup. Adding fresh pineapple chunks provides bursts of sweetness and enhances the tropical flavor profile of the dish.

Prep Time

The total preparation time for Baked Sweet and Sour Chicken is relatively short, making it perfect for busy weeknights or when you're entertaining guests. Here is the breakdown:

- Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time, Total Time, Yield

- Cook Time: 25-30 minutes

- Total Time: 45-60 minutes

- Yield: Serves 2-4 people

Detailed Directions and Instructions

Step 1: Preheat the Oven

Start by preheating your oven to 375°F (190°C). This ensures that your dish cooks evenly and thoroughly.

Step 2: Prepare the Chicken

In a shallow bowl, mix together the cornstarch, garlic powder, salt, and black pepper. The cornstarch creates a crispy texture when the chicken is sautéed.

Step 3: Coat the Chicken

Place the cubes of chicken into the bowl and toss them until they are well coated in the cornstarch mixture. Ensure that every piece of chicken is covered for optimal texture.

Step 4: Sauté the Chicken

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the coated chicken cubes to the skillet and cook for about 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is lightly browned. This step will create a delicious golden crust.

Step 5: Prepare the Sauce

While the chicken is sautéing, combine the pineapple juice, ketchup, brown sugar, and apple cider vinegar in a medium bowl. Whisk the mixture until the sugar is dissolved and all ingredients are well combined.

Step 6: Assemble in Baking Dish

Once the chicken is lightly browned, transfer the chicken cubes to a 9×13 inch baking dish. This size is perfect for allowing the chicken to bake evenly.

Step 7: Add the Sauce

Pour the prepared pineapple juice mixture over the chicken in the baking dish. Ensure that all pieces of chicken are well coated in the sauce to maximize flavor.

Step 8: Add the Vegetables

Top the chicken with diced onion, diced bell pepper, and diced pineapple. These fresh

ingredients not only add flavor but also add vibrant colors to your dish.

Step 9: Bake

Place the baking dish in the preheated oven and bake for 25-30 minutes. Keep an eye on your dish to ensure the chicken is cooked through and the sauce is bubbly.

Step 10: Check for Doneness

To ensure the chicken is fully cooked, check that the internal temperature has reached 165°F (75°C) using a meat thermometer. Once cooked, remove the dish from the oven.

Step 11: Serve

Serve the baked sweet and sour chicken over cooked rice. The rice will soak up the delightful sauce, adding another layer of flavor to the meal. Enjoy every bite!

Notes

When preparing this dish, consider the following tips:

- For extra sweetness, use fresh pineapple instead of canned.
- If you prefer a spicier version, consider adding crushed red pepper flakes or a dash of hot sauce to the sauce mix.
- You can also substitute chicken breast with chicken thighs for a richer flavor and tender texture.

Cook Techniques

1. Sautéing: This technique involves cooking the chicken in a hot skillet with oil, allowing it to develop a golden, crispy crust before baking.
2. Baking: Baking the chicken after adding the sauce ensures that all flavors meld together while cooking the chicken thoroughly.

FAQ

Can I use frozen chicken for this recipe?

Yes, but make sure to thaw the chicken completely before cutting and coating it. Cooking frozen chicken directly in the oven may result in uneven cooking.

What can I serve with Baked Sweet and Sour Chicken?

This dish pairs wonderfully with a variety of side dishes including steamed rice, fried rice, or even a fresh salad.

Can I prepare the sauce in advance?

Yes, you can prepare the sauce in advance and store it in the refrigerator for a couple of days. This can save time on busy evenings.

Can I add extra vegetables?

Absolutely! Feel free to add other vegetables like broccoli, snap peas, or carrots for extra nutrition and flavor.

Conclusion

Baked Sweet and Sour Chicken is an exciting dish that combines savory, sweet, tangy, and zesty elements into a harmonious meal. It not only satisfies your cravings for Chinese takeout but also provides a healthy, homemade alternative that you can prepare with ease. The versatility of this recipe means it can cater to various dietary preferences while still delivering phenomenal taste.

This recipe's simplicity makes it approachable for both novice cooks and seasoned chefs alike. The combination of minimal prep time and maximum flavor makes Baked Sweet and Sour Chicken ideal for weeknight dinners or special occasions. So next time you're looking for a delicious meal that the whole family will love, turn to this recipe and impress everyone around the table!

More Recipes Suggestions and Combination**Sweet and Sour Pork**

Consider trying Sweet and Sour Pork for a variation that's just as tasty. Using pork tenderloin can create a succulent dish that pairs wonderfully with the same pineapple sauce.

Vegetable Stir Fry

For a lighter option, a vegetable stir-fry tossed in the same sweet and sour sauce can be a

delightful meatless alternative. Pair it with tofu for protein.

Homemade Fried Rice

Serve your baked sweet and sour chicken over homemade fried rice, which can incorporate leftover chicken, vegetables, and eggs, making for a complete meal.

General Tso's Chicken

If you enjoy sweet dishes, try making General Tso's Chicken next. The flavors are slightly different, but it's just as satisfying and comforting as its sweet and sour counterpart.

Enjoy exploring these recipe ideas to expand your cooking repertoire!