



Uber-Gooey Chicken Wings

Serves 2 - 4

These wings are a saucy combination of tangy sweetness a bit of spice and just enough heat to make even the most die-hard wing-eater a fan. The key here is to taste the sauce and add a little more of whatever flavor you need to bring it all into balance. For any big game where big appetites need to be fed, I will make as much as 2 pounds of wings per person. Yes, they are that good!

Ingredients:

2 pounds chicken wings
½ cup fresh lime juice (from about 4 limes)
Scant ½ cup apricot preserves
½ cup soy sauce
1/2 cup brown sugar, lightly packed
4 large garlic cloves
1 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
Celery sticks, *for service* (optional)
High quality, chunky Blue Cheese dressing, *for service* (optional)

Preparation:

Remove the wing tips from the wings (if you care to). Pat the wings dry.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Heat a large skillet over high heat, and brown the chicken wings on one side, about 4 minutes. Turn and brown the other side for another 3 to 4 minutes, until just wings are just cooked through. Place wings in a deep aluminum (disposable) pan, arranging in a single layer (increasing the number and size of pans depending on the amount of wings you are making).

Place the lime juice, apricot preserves, soy sauce, brown sugar, garlic, ginger and red pepper flakes in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade (a blender works well here, too). Process until smooth and thick. Taste and adjust the flavors. Pour mixture over wings in baking pan. Toss to coat the wings evenly.

Bake wings for 50 minutes, turning and basting wings with sauce in the pan after 30 minutes. Bake for an additional 15 to 20 minutes basting (and turning again, if necessary) the wings. The sauce becomes thick toward the end of the baking time. Watch carefully, as it will burn quickly.

To Serve:

Turn out the hot wings onto a warmed platter or serving dish. Serve with celery sticks and chunky blue cheese dressing. Serve immediately.

Chef's Note:

I recommend making these in a disposable baking pan, the deeper the better, which maximizes sauce coverage on the wings. When tasting the sauce, look first for balance between the lime juice, soy sauce and apricot preserves before adding additional garlic, ginger or heat. No one flavor should be pronounced. If you taste it and say, "this is good!" you've got it. Otherwise, add a bit more of the missing flavor. If baking several pans of wings, bake in the top and bottom thirds of oven, switching positions after 30 minutes.

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