



CHICKEN DISH

SERVINGS: 8 ACTIVE TIME: 45 mins TOTAL TIME: 90 mins

If you are on the hunt for the edible embodiment of comfort, you've come to the right place. A family recipe that spans three generations, Chicken Dish does not require a fancy name to draw a crowd for what it perhaps lacks in creativity it more than makes up for in flavor, heart and straight-up comfort. There for you like a true friend, eating Chicken Dish is like giving your taste buds a hug - they will feel the love!

Ingredients

- > 2-3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken (mix of breasts and thighs recommended)
- > 3 cups shredded cheese (mix of cheddar and pepper jack recommended)
- > 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- > 3/4 cup sour cream
- > 2 4 oz. cans of green chiles
- > A box of rice pilaf
- > An onion, optional
- > 3 cloves of garlic, optional

Directions

1. Over medium heat, toast rice in a medium sauce pot with a little butter or oil. Make sure to coat each grain of rice in the fat. Add water (per the box's instructions) to pot and bring to boil. Once a boil is reached, cover and reduce to simmer. Cook rice as instructed until all water is absorbed and the rice is fluffy.
2. If you are going to include the optional onions and garlic, chop them now while the rice is cooking - cutting the onions in 1/2 inch squares and mincing the garlic is typically how I prepare them. Set aside to be used in a step or two.
3. Next, cut the pieces of chicken into quarters or thirds, depending on how large they are. Season with salt. In a wide skillet over high heat, sear the chicken pieces on both sides. Depending on how large your skillet is, this step will likely need to be done in batches. The goal here isn't to cook the chicken fully, per se, but to get a good amount of color on them to enhance their flavor. Once all pieces are seared, set aside on a plate to cool slightly.

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Shopping List

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken (mix of breasts and thighs) | <input type="checkbox"/> mayonnaise | <input type="checkbox"/> A box of rice pilaf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 cups shredded cheese (mix of cheddar and pepper jack) | <input type="checkbox"/> sour cream | <input type="checkbox"/> An onion, optional |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 4 oz. cans of green chiles | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 cloves of garlic, optional |

4. If you are using the onions and garlic, wipe out any burnt bits or leftover oil with a paper towel from the same skillet you used to sear the chicken with. You may want to use tongs for this to avoid burning your hand. Return the skillet to medium heat and add a little fresh oil. Soften the onions for 3 or 4 minutes and then add in the garlic and continue to cook for another one or two minutes and then turn off the heat. You are just looking to soften the vegetables and take advantage of any leftover flavor from searing the chicken.
5. In a small mixing bowl, combine the mayonnaise and sour cream and mix to combine. I prefer to use a volumetric measuring cup (one that can hold at least 2 cups) to multitask by putting in 3/4 cup of mayo on the bottom, and then adding sour cream to get up the 1 1/2 cup total mark on the measuring cup. If using a 2 cup measuring cup, that will leave you plenty of space to stir, etc. and while it isn't required, I will usually add a little salt and pepper and a pinch or two of garlic powder and onion powder to this mixture as well to bump the flavor. Set aside to be used in a minute.
6. Now would be a good time to shred the cheese if you did not buy it already shredded. The chicken should be cool enough to handle now. Using two forks, tear the pieces into smaller bite sized pieces. It's okay if a couple of them are still uncooked in parts, they will finish cooking in the oven. Speaking of which, pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
7. It is time to assemble the dish. In a 13" x 9" Pyrex baking dish, spoon the cooked rice into the bottom of the dish and spread it around to make an even layer. Next, spin out the chiles over the rice and if you cooked onions and garlic, add them now as well. For the next layer, add in the chicken so it is spread evenly across. Spoon the sour cream and mayonnaise mixture on top and spread it out over the chicken using the back of the spoon for even coverage. Finally, sprinkle the cheese over the top of the dish. At this point, I usually sprinkle a little more garlic powder and onion powder on top of the cheese to make the crust as flavorful as possible.
8. Cover the dish loosely with tin foil and cook for 30 minutes in the oven on 350 degrees. After 30 minutes, turn the oven up to 400 and bake uncovered for the last 15 to 20 minutes to let the cheese brown. Take it out of the oven when it is nice and golden brown. Let it rest for a few minutes before serving.



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