



ANSON MILLS

Chicken Karaage

Yield

5 or 6 *izakaya* servings; 3 or 4 main course servings

Time

About 25 minutes to prep the marinade and chicken, 8 to 12 hours to marinate, and about 20 minutes to fry

Cooking Remarks

For this recipe, you'll want boneless thighs with the skin on. They can be hard to find. So man-up and get some bone-in, skin-on thighs and remove the bones yourself! It's easy and you'll feel like pro. For frying, an all-American Fry Daddy works well; so does a smallish French enameled cast-iron Dutch oven (we used a 5½-quart Staub cocotte—color black, to be precise). If you're too lazy to make the ponzu, lemon wedges may be substituted.

With the exception of donuts and picnic fried chicken, Americans like their fried foods jumping hot. The Japanese, however, aren't prescriptive about the serving temperature of *their* fried foods; chicken karaage is often a part of bento boxes, and thus frequently eaten at room temperature, or even slightly chilled. So if you'd like to prepare the chicken a little in advance, by all means, do so. If you prefer to serve it blisteringly hot, that's fine, too.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a glass 8-inch square baking dish, a sharp paring or boning knife, a small saucepan with a lid, a large fine-mesh strainer set over a bowl, a wire rack set in a baking sheet, paper towels, a Fry Daddy or an 5½-quart enameled cast-iron Dutch oven, a shallow baking dish, an instant-read thermometer, a wire skimmer, a serving platter, and individual dipping bowls for the ponzu.

Ingredients

for the chicken

3 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari

1 tablespoon mirin

1 tablespoon sake

1 tablespoon sugar

2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil

2 garlic cloves, minced

Generous 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger

½ teaspoon freshly ground white pepper

2 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

4 ounces (¾ cup) Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice Flour

1½ tablespoons Anson Mills Sea Island Benne Seeds (optional)

for the ponzu

1/4 cup soy sauce or tamari
2 tablespoons spring or filtered water
3 packed tablespoons katsuobushi
2 tablespoons juice from 1 juicy lemon
1½ teaspoons rice vinegar
1½ teaspoons mirin

3 to 4 cups peanut oil

Directions

- 1. Prepare the chicken:** In a glass 8-inch square baking dish, combine the soy sauce, mirin, sake, sugar, sesame oil, garlic, ginger, and white pepper and stir until the sugar dissolves. Set the marinade aside while you bone out the chicken.
- 2. Trim the excess fat and skin from the chicken thighs.** To remove the bone from each piece, turn the thigh skin-side down. Locate the bone and the line of fat that runs along the length of the bone. Beginning at the top of the thigh and using the tip of a sharp paring or boning knife, cut around the tip of the bone to free it. Now use the tip of the knife to scrape/cut the meat away from both sides of the bone. Hold the knife blade horizontally and slide it under the midsection of the bone, and cut downward toward the end of the bone to free it. A piece of cartilage will remain attached to one edge of the thigh meat. Trim it off. Once you've removed the bones from all of the thighs, use a very sharp chef's knife to cut the thighs into rough 1½-inch pieces, keeping the skin attached as best you can; if your knife is razor-sharp, it's easier to do this with the skin side facing up. Don't obsess over making perfect and evenly shaped chunks.
- 3. Add the chicken to the marinade and stir well to combine.** Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 8 hours, or up to 12 hours. Stir the chicken once or twice during the marinating time.
- 4. While the chicken marinates, make the ponzu:** In a small saucepan, heat the soy sauce and water over medium heat just until steam begins to rise from the liquid. Add the katsuobushi and swirl the pan to moisten all of the shavings. Cover the pan and set aside until the liquid has cooled to room temperature.
- 5. Set a fine-mesh strainer over a bowl and pour the infused soy sauce into the strainer.** Using a spoon or rubber spatula, press on the katsuobushi to extract as much liquid as possible; discard the katsuobushi. Stir the lemon juice, rice vinegar, and mirin into the soy sauce. Cover the ponzu and refrigerate until you're ready to fry the chicken.
- 6. When you're ready to fry, remove the ponzu from the refrigerator to allow it to come to room temperature.** Set a large fine-mesh strainer over a bowl. Set a wire rack in a baking sheet and line the rack with a double thickness of paper towels. Drain the chicken and shake the strainer to release as much excess marinade as possible. Pour 3 cups of peanut oil into a Fry Daddy or 4 cups into a 5½ quart Dutch oven (the oil should reach a depth of about 1½ inches). Plug in the

Fry Daddy or set the Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Put the rice flour, sesame seeds (if using), and a big pinch of salt in a shallow baking dish and mix well to combine. Add the chicken pieces to the rice flour mixture and toss until each piece is completely coated.

7. When the oil registers about 365 degrees on a deep-fry or instant-read thermometer, add the dredged chicken pieces one at a time, shaking off the excess flour before you drop them into the hot oil. Fry the chicken, stirring gently and occasionally with a wire skimmer, until crisp and nicely browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Using the skimmer, transfer the chicken to the prepared wire rack to drain. Allow the oil to come back up to temp and dredge and fry the remaining the chicken as you did the first batch.

8. Transfer the chicken to a serving platter. Divide the ponzu among individual dipping bowls and serve with the chicken.