



Your Commissary ... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Twisted Buffalo Strips!

Today, most Americans are overscheduled so cooking meals at home is not a priority. Why should it be when prepared foods are sold on nearly every corner and it is so easy and quick to just grab "fast" food on the way home from work or use the drive-thru and get a kid's meal on the way to soccer practice? It is much easier to eat out and be served a big basket of food rather than to make it ourselves. We learn to like, crave, and accept the limited taste profile of prepared foods. As a result, fewer children learn to cook, the rate of obesity continues to rise and we become even more dependent on prepared, fast foods.

Many haven't considered the consequences of frequently consuming these fast foods to "nourish" themselves and their families. They may be too busy to think long-term and focus on their overall health. They are just trying to make it from meal to meal, so the cumulative impact of excess fat and sodium and the low intake of fresh fruits and vegetables has on their waistlines and overall health, isn't a priority.

To change this trend and help people to be more "mindful" about how they nourish themselves and their families, health professionals are now advising that people don't have to be deprived of their favorite fast foods like burgers, fries, wings, etc., but they do have to prepare the foods at home. Meaning, they can have their fries and burgers, but only if they put forth the effort to peel, cut and fry the potatoes and pat out the hamburger and cook it. This allows for the enjoyment of "not so healthy foods." But since they must be cooked at home, the frequency of eating them will likely decrease.

Cooking "guilty pleasure" foods at home can also be a healthier way to indulge. When we prepare foods, like buffalo chicken "wings" at home, we can choose fresh ingredients, use less salt and unhealthy fats, and control the portion sizes. On average, a typical basket of 10 wings served at a restaurant has 800-1,000 calories, 35-40 grams of fat, and nearly twice the maximum recommended level for sodium. Try this meal solution to lighten up on the calories and sodium while using healthy fats to make some tasty boneless wings!



Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F Serves: 4

1. Slice 1 lb. of fresh, boneless skinless chicken breasts (or thighs) into 1 inch wide strips.
2. Mix ¼ cup of milk, 2 tbsp. of hot sauce and ½ cup of olive oil mayonnaise together in a bowl until well blended.
3. Finely crush enough rice crackers (any flavor) to make about ¾ cup of crumbs, and then mix in 1/3 cup of finely shredded cheddar cheese.
4. Dip a strip of chicken in the mayonnaise and then the cracker/cheese crumbs. Dip it again in the mayonnaise and then lastly the cracker/cheese crumbs. Place the "double breaded" strip on a baking sheet that has been lightly oiled to prevent sticking. Repeat step 4 for the remaining chicken strips.
5. Bake the strips (not touching) for 20-25 minutes. Half way through the baking time, turn the strips.
6. While the chicken strips are baking, wash and cut three medium-sized potatoes into chunks and dice ½ a medium-size onion. Season with a little salt and pepper to taste. Add 2 tbsp. of water and microwave in a covered dish for 6-8 minutes.
7. For the dipping sauce, mix 6 oz. of plain non-fat Greek yogurt with 1 tsp. of lime juice and 2 tbsp. of chopped, fresh cilantro. (2 tsp. of dried cilantro can be used instead of fresh cilantro.)
8. Serve ¼ of the chicken strips and ¼ of the dipping sauce, with ¼ the potatoes and 4-5 celery and carrot sticks. (For a little more heat, add some hot sauce to the dipping sauce.)

NOTES:

- The dipping sauce can be used as dressing on your favorite salad or in place of sour cream for tacos.
- Use some buffalo chicken strips as a source of protein to top your favorite salad.
- Whole-wheat crackers or panko can be used in place of rice crackers.

DISCLAIMER: YOU MAY USE ANY LIKE PRODUCTS OF ANY BRAND IN MAKING THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL. THE PICTURES SHOWN ARE NOT AN ENDORSEMENT OF THESE PRODUCTS.

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