

SKILLET CHICKEN THIGHS WITH LEMON BUTTER SAUCE

A CAST-IRON SKILLET GIVES CHICKEN THIGHS A CRISP TEXTURE, AND HOMEMADE LEMON BUTTER SAUCE ADDS EXTRA FLAVOR

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES / COOKING TIME: 12 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 TEASPOON GRANULATED GARLIC POWDER
- ½ TEASPOON PLUS 1/8 TEASPOON FINE SEA SALT
- ¼ TEASPOON GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 4 (6-OUNCE) BONELESS, SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS
- 3 TABLESPOONS (45 MILLILITERS) AVOCADO OIL, DIVIDED
- 1 TABLESPOON (15 MILLILITERS) LEMON JUICE
- 1 ½ TABLESPOON UNSALTED BUTTER
- 1 TEASPOON FRESH THYME LEAVES

DIRECTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: WASH YOUR HANDS.

1. HEAT AN 8-INCH OR 10-INCH CAST IRON SKILLET OVER MEDIUM-HIGH HEAT UNTIL HOT.
2. WHILE THE SKILLET IS WARMING, ADD TO A SMALL BOWL GARLIC POWDER, ½ TEASPOON SEA SALT AND PEPPER AND STIR TO COMBINE.
3. ARRANGE CHICKEN THIGHS ON A LARGE PLATE, THEN USE SHARP KITCHEN SHEARS TO TRIM FAT FROM THE EDGES.
4. SPRINKLE HALF THE SPICE MIXTURE OVER CHICKEN THIGHS, FLIP AND REPEAT.
5. ADD 2 TABLESPOONS AVOCADO OIL TO THE SKILLET AND LET WARM FOR ABOUT 60 SECONDS.
6. PLACE 2 CHICKEN THIGHS IN THE SKILLET AND COOK FOR 6 MINUTES.
7. FLIP THIGHS AND COOK FOR AN ADDITIONAL 5 TO 6 MINUTES, OR UNTIL THEY REACH AN INTERNAL TEMPERATURE OF 165°F.
8. REMOVE THIGHS FROM THE SKILLET AND PLACE THEM ON A SEPARATE PAPER TOWEL-LINED PLATE.
9. ADD REMAINING AVOCADO OIL TO THE SKILLET, THEN REPEAT WITH REMAINING CHICKEN THIGHS.
10. WHILE CHICKEN IS COOKING, COMBINE LEMON JUICE, BUTTER, 1/8 TEASPOON SEA SALT AND THYME IN A SMALL MICROWAVE-SAFE BOWL AND MICROWAVE ON HIGH FOR 45 SECONDS. STIR UNTIL BUTTER IS FULLY MELTED.
11. DRIZZLE SAUCE OVER COOKED CHICKEN THIGHS JUST BEFORE SERVING.
12. GARNISH WITH LEMON WEDGES AND SPRIGS OF THYME, IF DESIRED.

***NUTRITION INFORMATION:** 4 SERVINGS—1 CHICKEN THIGH (180 GRAMS) AND 2/3 TABLESPOON SAUCE (7 GRAMS) 345 CALORIES / 238 TOTAL FAT / 68 SATURATED FAT / 176MG CHOLESTEROL / 514 MG SODIUM / 18 CARBOHYDRATE / 08 FIBER08 SUGAR / 318 PROTEIN / 359MG POTASSIUM / 295MG PHOSPHORUS*

Leftovers and Food Safety

Often when we cook at home or eat in a restaurant, we have leftovers. To ensure that leftovers are safe to eat, make sure the food is cooked to a safe temperature and refrigerate the leftovers promptly. Not cooking food to a safe temperature and leaving food out at an unsafe temperature are the two main causes of foodborne illness. Safe handling of leftovers is very important to reduce foodborne illness. Follow the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service recommendations for handling leftovers safely.

- Cook Food Safely at Home
- Keep Food out of the Danger Zone
- Wrap leftovers Well
- Store leftovers safely
- Refreezing Previously Frozen leftovers

Cook Food Safely at Home

The first step in having safe leftovers is cooking the food safely. Use a food thermometer to make sure that the food is cooked to a safe, minimum temperature.

- **Red meats:** Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops, and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 142° F as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.
- **Ground meats:** Cook all raw ground beef, pork, lamb, and veal to an internal temperature of 160° F as measured with a food thermometer.
- **Poultry:** Cook all poultry to an internal temperature of 165° F as measured with a food thermometer.

Keep Food out of the Danger Zone

Bacteria grow rapidly between the temperatures of 40° F and 140° F. After food is safely cooked, hot food must be kept hot at 140° F or warmer to prevent bacterial growth. Within 2 hours of cooking food or after it is removed from an appliance keeping it warm, leftovers must be refrigerated. Throw away all perishable food that has been left in room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is over 90° F, such as at an outdoor picnic during the summer).

Cool Food Rapidly

To prevent bacteria growth, it's important to cool food rapidly so it reaches as fast as possible the safe refrigerator-storage temperature of 40° F or below. To do this,

divide large amounts of food into shallow containers. A big pot of soup, for example, will take a long time to cool, inviting bacteria to multiply and increasing the danger of foodborne illness. Instead, divide the pot of soup into smaller containers so it will cool quickly.

Cut large items of food into smaller portions to cool. For whole roasts or hams, slice or cut them into smaller parts. Cut turkey into smaller pieces and refrigerate. Slice breast meat; legs and wings may be left whole.

Hot food can be placed directly in the refrigerator or be rapidly chilled in an ice or cold-water bath before refrigerating.

Wrap Leftovers Well

Cover leftovers, wrap them in airtight packaging, or seal them in storage containers. These practices help keep bacteria out, retain moisture, and prevent leftovers from picking up odors from other food in the refrigerator. Immediately refrigerate or freeze the wrapped leftovers for rapid cooling.

Store Leftovers Safely

Leftovers can be kept in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days or frozen for 3 to 4 months. Although safe indefinitely, frozen leftovers can lose moisture and flavor when stored for longer times in the freezer.

Thaw Frozen Leftovers Safely

Safe ways to thaw leftovers include the refrigerator, cold water and the microwave oven. Refrigerator thawing takes the longest, but the leftovers stay safe the entire time. After thawing, the food should be used within 3 to 4 days or can be refrozen.

Cold water thawing is faster than refrigerator thawing but requires more attention. The frozen leftovers must be in a leak-proof package or plastic bag. If the bag leaks, water can get into the food and bacteria from the air or surrounding environment could enter it. Foods thawed by the cold-water method should be cooked before refreezing.

Microwave thawing is the fastest method. When thawing leftovers in a microwave, continue to heat the food until it reaches 165°F as measured with a food thermometer. Food thawed in the microwave can be refrozen after heating it to this safe temperature.

Reheating Leftovers without Thawing

It is safe to reheat frozen leftovers without thawing, either in a saucepan or microwave (in the case of a soup or stew) or in the oven (for example, casseroles and combination meals). Reheating will take longer than if the food was thawed first, but it is safe to do when time is short.

Reheat Leftovers Safely

When reheating leftovers, be sure they reach 165* F as measured with a food thermometer. Reheat sauces, soups and gravies by bringing them to a rolling boil. Cover leftovers to reheat. This retains moisture and ensures that food will heat all the way through.

When heating in the microwave, cover and rotate the food for even heating. Arrange food items evenly in a covered microwave safe glass or ceramic dish and add some liquid if needed. Be sure the top is microwave safe and vent the lid or wrap to let the steam escape. The moist heat that is created helps destroy bacteria and will ensure uniform cooking. Also, because microwaves have cold spots, check the temperature of the food in several places with a food thermometer and allow a resting time before checking the internal temperature of the food with a food thermometer. Cooking continues for a longer time in dense food such as a whole turkey or beef roast than in less dense food like breads, small vegetables and fruits.

Refreezing Previously Frozen Leftovers

Sometimes there are leftovers “leftovers”. It is safe to refreeze any food remaining after reheating previously frozen leftovers to the safe temperature of 165* F as measured with a food thermometer.

If a large container of leftovers was frozen and only a portion of it is needed, it is safe to thaw the leftovers in the refrigerator, remove the needed portion and refreeze the remainder of the thawed leftovers without reheating it.

Food Safety Quiz

Multiple Choice

1. How long can food safely remain in the 'Danger Zone' (40°F–140°F)?
A. 30 minutes B. 1 hour C. 2 hours D. 4 hours
2. Which pathogen is most commonly spread by poor hand hygiene?
A. E. coli B. Norovirus C. Salmonella D. Listeria
3. What is the minimum safe cooking temperature for poultry?
A. 140°F B. 145°F C. 155°F D. 165°F
4. Correct refrigerator storage order (top to bottom):
A. Raw chicken, ready-to-eat foods, raw beef B. Ready-to-eat foods, raw beef, raw chicken
5. Which food is highest risk for Listeria?
A. Apples B. Deli meats C. Crackers D. Pasta

True or False

6. Cleaning removes bacteria; sanitizing removes dirt.
7. Bacteria grow fastest between 40°F and 140°F.
8. Leftovers can be safely eaten for up to 7 days.
9. Handwashing should last at least 20 seconds.
10. Cross-contamination transfers allergens or bacteria.

Short Answer

11. Considerations when families bring food to patients:
12. Difference between cross-contamination and cross-contact:
13. Chicken left out 3 hours—what to do & why:
14. Three situations requiring handwashing:
15. Foods immunocompromised patients should avoid:

Answer Key

1.C 2.B 3.D 4.B 5.B

6.F 7.T 8.F 9.T 10.T

11. Patient risk, policies, temp control, contamination risk

12. Bacteria vs allergen transfer
13. Discard—too long in Danger Zone
14. Before prep, after raw meat, after restroom, etc.
15. Unpasteurized dairy, deli meats, raw sprouts, etc.