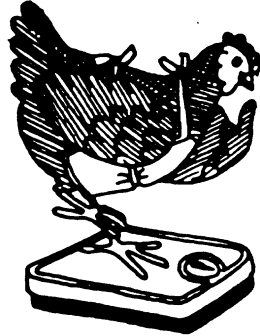




# TENDER TEXAS CHICKEN



*The Natural Light Meat*

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Chicken offers consumers the ultimate meat in nutrient density at an affordable price. Chicken, a tremendously versatile meat, provides the convenience of preparation and low caloric content desired by people in today's lifestyle.

Chicken has achieved great popularity in the market place and status as one of the most healthful meats because the broiler industry has been responsive to the needs of the consumer. Information in this bulletin briefly outlines the growth and development of the dynamic broiler industry and provides a summary of the nutritional quality of chicken meat. In addition, a selection of popular and versatile Texas chicken preparation methods is included.

### **Chicken and the Consumer**

The chicken broiler industry has achieved the current level of success because consumers are getting the products they want. This dynamic industry made the necessary decisions, beginning in about 1955, which committed poultry production and marketing businesses to a vertically integrated system of management. Through this management system the broiler producer/marketer exercises total management control of all phases of the business, including breeding and genetics, nutrition and feeding, production and management, processing, distribution and marketing. The economic efficiencies achieved through this management system have resulted in a high quality product being offered to the consumer at an attractive price.

Improvements in genetics and nutrition mean that today's birds grow faster and heavier, about 4.3 pounds in 7 weeks, with a higher proportion of breast, thigh and drumstick muscle. This is a vast improvement from the 3.5-pound bird which required a 15-week growing period in 1953. The short growing period, coupled with a phenomenal feed efficiency of 2 pounds of feed per pound of weight gain, has resulted in a tender meat product that is high in protein and low in fat. These advances have been achieved while feeding a diet that is approximately 60 percent grain (corn or milo)

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and 40 percent soybean meal, supplemented with vitamins and minerals.

The broiler production/marketing industry is the most technologically intense in animal agriculture. Advancements in processing have resulted in the development of products that are desired by the Texas and American consumer, including such items as fast food fried chicken in the 1960's, chicken nuggets in the 1970's and other boneless meat items in the 1980's. The broiler industry is the leader in providing great variety in the product base at the supermarket.

Current research and development efforts by the industry seek to fulfill the consumer's needs and desires. Some of these include further reduction in fat content (even though the fat levels are already very low) and the development of processed broiler products, such as deli meats and roasted and broiled products that are even lower in caloric and fat content than the currently available processed meat products.

The broiler industry's attitude regarding the consumer can best be summarized as the E—N—V—Y principle. Every effort in the marketing plan is to offer the most **economical** products, with the highest **nutritional** content while still providing the greatest **versatility** and convenience to **you**, the consumer.

### **Nutrient Density**

Chicken broiler meat (whole bird, muscle only), according to the United States Department of Agriculture Handbook 8-5, contains a total protein content of 21.39 percent, with a total fat content of 3.08 percent. It is the standard of comparison in providing the consumer with a nutrient-dense product. When the cost of protein in foods (see Extension publication L-1741 *Food Protein Cost*) is evaluated using the United States Recommended Dietary Allowance (US-RDA), whole broilers rank near the top in providing low-cost protein. Chicken broiler meat contains higher levels of protein than most meat sources. In addition, broiler meat contains all the essential amino acids presently known to be required in human diets. Raw broiler breast meat, containing 23.09 percent protein, provides the greatest quantity of these essential amino acids. The protein is easily digested, which makes it attractive to senior citizens as well as people recovering from illness or receiving other medical care.

Chicken meat is low in cholesterol, containing only 70 mg per 100 grams (about a 3.5-ounce serving). Broiler meat also has a low fat level (only 3.08 percent), which is predominantly unsaturated fat. With a ratio of 2:1 (unsaturated to saturated fat), the fat content is actually beneficial in helping to maintain normal serum cholesterol levels.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of all is the fact that chicken broiler meat (raw), containing 119 calories per 100 grams of edible portion (breast meat contains only 110 calories per 100 grams), offers the consumer a very good product for use in weight control programs. The trend of most Americans away from occupations requiring physical labor to less strenuous jobs requires greater attention to dietary choices as well as exercise programs to maintain sound personal health. Chicken meat offers great taste, high protein, low fat and low caloric content in one super, "nutrient-dense" package.

### **Product Quality Requirements**

Chicken broilers provide the consumer a uniformly high-quality, wholesome product because broiler marketing firms are committed to an intensive **quality assurance** program. Components of this program include extensive quality evaluations at all stages of production and processing, strict temperature control throughout processing and use of the most effective packaging systems available. An integral part of this total program is the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service requirement that not only *each bird* be inspected both *internally* and *externally* to assure that the product is wholesome for human consumption, but also that overall plant sanitation be strictly monitored.

Modern poultry processing systems have been designed so that a 95 percent overall reduction in bacterial content is achieved from the live bird to the finished ready-to-cook product. Strict temperature control in the chill pack and IQF (individual quick frozen) packaging systems further assures that the product reaches the consumer at the highest level of quality possible.

The key to safe and effective handling of chicken meat is to recognize that maintaining the excellent quality of this product, as all high-protein food sources, requires a basic understanding of common-sense food handling procedures. The consumer can be assured that the chicken is maintained at peak quality by strictly adhering to the **4-C's rule** in food handling. These include:

- Keep food preparation areas **clean**.
- **Cook** chicken meat adequately.
- **Chill** cooked meats as soon as possible following serving.
- Most important of all, avoid **cross-contamination** of cooked food with bacteria from raw food, such as using the same cutting board for a cooked product that has been used for a raw product without proper cleaning between uses.

## **Chicken —The Way You Like It**

Chicken meat offers unequalled versatility in preparation methods. This versatility is directly related to the superior organoleptic properties of broiler meat. Chicken meat possesses a fresh, light and delicate flavor which makes it easy to season the meat for any style of cooking. The delicately flavored meat of chicken requires less salt to achieve proper seasoning, thus helping the consumer to reduce sodium intake.

Broiler meat also has the added advantage of being very tender. This muscle tenderness has been achieved as a result of the short growing period (7 to 8 weeks). Because the meat is naturally tender, no mechanical tenderization or lengthy marination is required to improve the muscle texture. Marination is primarily used to offer flavor alternatives and usually requires a very short time (20 minutes to 4 hours) to achieve the desired results.

Chicken broilers offer the consumer one of the most consistently high-quality, uniform and versatile meats in today's market regardless of the market location. This is possible because all commercial broiler strains (breeds) are basically yellow Cornish - White Plymouth Rock crosses. These strains possess the ability to grow rapidly and are very efficient at converting feed into body gain, requiring 2 pounds of feed to produce 1 pound of broiler. Although there may be minor consumer preferences between broilers produced in different geographic regions, such as yellow or white skin color and large or small body sizes, the finished product is always a high-quality, tender and tasty chicken broiler—the way you like it.

### **Grill, Broil, Stir-Fry or Barbecue**

Chicken broiler meat is tailored to meet the desires of today's consumer in flavor, tenderness, convenience and nutrition. The low fat content and high nutrient density are further enhanced by the fact that boneless chicken meat is totally adaptable to popular methods of preparation, including grilling, broiling, stir-frying or sauteing.

Choose your favorite boneless chicken filet and enjoy any of these popular and tasty chicken delights. Just remember that using boneless meat requires less cooking time. Cooking by grilling and broiling also results in dishes that are beneficial for consumers who are restricting caloric intake as part of their personal health program.

## Chicken Fajitas

1 tablespoon oil or liquid margarine  
4 chicken breast or thigh filets  
1 bell pepper, cut in julienne strips  
1 onion, cut in julienne strips

Fajita seasoning (dry mix in shaker bottle)  
Guacamole  
Pico de gallo  
Sour cream  
Flour tortillas

## Guacamole

1 avocado  
½ teaspoon lime juice (approx.)  
2 sprigs fresh parsley, chopped (optional)  
1 clove garlic, crushed (optional)  
1 tomato, coarsely chopped

Peel and mash avocado; add lime juice to prevent discoloration. Add parsley, tomato and garlic.

## Pico de Gallo

1 tomato  
½ bunch green onions  
1 jalapeno pepper  
1 bunch cilantro

Coarsely chop tomato, green onions, cilantro and pepper. Combine.

Sprinkle fajita seasoning liberally on both sides of breast or thigh filets. Allow chicken to marinate while slicing vegetables. To prepare fajitas in the kitchen, heat 1 tablespoon oil or liquid margarine in skillet or saute pan, add chicken filet and cook using medium-high heat. If outside grilling is desired, place chicken over white-hot coals. In both cooking methods, allow approximately 4 minutes per side for chicken to cook. The key is to cook as rapidly as possible to retain the moist and juicy nature of the chicken filet. The chicken is completely done when the meat is white throughout the filet. When cooking in the kitchen, vegetables may be added to the skillet the last few minutes before the chicken is done. Add more oil if necessary and saute the onions and peppers until they are tender-crisp and not overcooked.

Pour the chicken and sauted onions and peppers onto a platter. Cut the chicken into strips about ¼-inch by 2-inches long. Although cooking the chicken filet before cutting into strips results in a more tender and juicy product, cutting into strips before cooking will shorten the cooking time if desired.

Serve on heated flour tortillas with guacamole, sour cream and pico de gallo. Makes eight to ten fajitas.

## Italian Chicken Pita

1½ cups chicken meat, diced into small pieces  
2 tablespoons butter or margarine  
1 clove garlic, minced  
½ onion, chopped  
½ teaspoon oregano  
½ teaspoon parsley flakes  
¼ teaspoon thyme  
or 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning for oregano, parsley and thyme.

8 oz. can tomato sauce  
1 tablespoon parmesan cheese  
4 ounces mushrooms, sliced  
1½ cups grated mozzarella cheese  
3 rounds of pita (pocket) bread, cut in half  
Salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter or margarine in skillet. Heat garlic in butter to release flavor. Add onions and saute until translucent. Add chicken and cook until chicken is white, about 10 minutes. Add mushrooms, oregano, parsley, thyme, parmesan cheese and tomato sauce. Cook an additional 5 to 10 minutes. Place a small amount of cheese in each

pocket, spoon one-sixth of chicken mixture into each pita pocket and top with additional cheese. Serve immediately. Makes six sandwiches.

**Note:** Mixture can be spooned onto slices of French bread, topped with cheese and heated in oven.

### Mexican-Italian Chicken Texas Style

The name of this dish is longer than the recipe used to prepare it. Even though the preparation method is simple, the results are delicious. Once you try this tasty treat you may never cook traditional barbecue again.

8 chicken filets (breast, thigh or drumstick)  
32 ounces Italian style seasoned salad dressing  
16 ounces picante sauce (mild, medium or hot)

Select the picante sauce that matches your personal taste; add the Italian style dressing and the chicken; and marinate in a covered dish in the refrigerator for 6 to 8 hours (minimum of 4 hours; can be marinated as long as overnight). The recommended method of cooking is to grill on outside barbecue pit over white-hot coals. Cooking in this manner requires about 8 to 10 minutes.

Chicken prepared in this manner may be substituted for the fajita style meat and served with guacamole, grilled onions and peppers and pico de gallo, or served with more traditional side dishes such as beans, potato salad and coleslaw. Serves six to eight people.

### Chinese Chicken Stir Fry

1 whole fryer breast, boned and skinned	3 green onions
4 fresh mushrooms, or	½ teaspoon salt
4-ounce can sliced mushrooms	½ teaspoon sugar
2 large carrots, pared	½ cup vegetable oil (approx.)
½ stem celery	¼ cup peanuts
2 cups broccoli, broken into flowerettes	17-ounce can Chinese noodles

#### Chicken Seasoning

1 egg white, beaten  
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 tablespoon cornstarch

#### Sauce

½ teaspoon instant chicken bouillon  
½ cup water  
½ tablespoon cornstarch  
½ tablespoon soy sauce

Slice chicken into very thin pieces (approximately ½-inch thick and 1- to 1½-inches square). Combine seasonings for chicken, pour over chicken pieces and stir to coat pieces evenly. Slice carrots, celery and mushrooms into ⅛-inch slices, green onions into ⅜-inch pieces. Combine sauce ingredients (bouillon, water, cornstarch and soy sauce). Stir until dissolved.

In an omelet skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil. Saute carrots and broccoli for 1½ minutes. Remove to a plate or bowl. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in the same pan for 30 seconds. Saute chicken for about 2 minutes or until all of the meat turns white. Add peanuts and sauted vegetables to the chicken; add salt and sugar; toss together gently in the pan for 30 seconds. Stir sauce mixture throughly. Heat in hot pan until thick and bubbly.

Place noodles on a large platter. Add Chinese Chicken Stir Fry to the top of the noodles and pour the sauce over the chicken mixture. Serve immediately. Serves six.

**Nutrient Composition of Chicken\***  
(Broilers or fryers, meat only, raw)

Nutrient	Amount in 100 grams			
	Breast	Thigh	Drumstick	Whole
Water, g	74.760	75.810	76.380	75.460
<b>Food energy, Kcal</b>	<b>110.000</b>	<b>119.000</b>	<b>119.000</b>	<b>119.000</b>
<b>Protein, g</b>	<b>23.090</b>	<b>19.650</b>	<b>20.590</b>	<b>21.390</b>
<b>Total fat, g</b>	<b>1.240</b>	<b>3.910</b>	<b>3.420</b>	<b>3.080</b>
Calcium, mg	11.000	10.000	11.000	12.000
Iron, mg	0.720	1.040	1.030	0.890
Magnesium, mg	28.000	24.000	23.000	25.000
Phosphorus, mg	196.000	168.000	166.000	173.000
Potassium, mg	256.000	231.000	226.000	229.000
Sodium, mg	65.000	86.000	88.000	77.000
Zinc, mg	0.800	1.910	2.210	1.540
Copper, mg	0.041	0.067	0.063	0.053
Manganese, mg	0.018	0.020	0.021	0.019
Ascorbic acid, mg	1.200	3.100	3.200	2.300
Thiamin, mg	0.070	0.076	0.082	0.073
Riboflavin, mg	0.092	0.188	0.199	0.142
Niacin, mg	11.194	6.328	5.778	8.239
Pantothenic acid, mg	0.819	1.233	1.287	1.058
Vitamin B <sub>6</sub> , mg	0.550	0.330	0.340	0.430
Folacin, mg	4.000	10.000	10.000	7.000
Vitamin B <sub>12</sub> , mcg	0.380	0.350	0.370	0.370
Vitamin A, IU	21.000	65.000	57.000	52.000
Saturated fat, g	0.330	1.000	0.380	0.790
Monounsaturated fat, g	0.300	1.210	1.060	0.900
Polyunsaturated fat, g	0.280	0.970	0.850	0.750
<b>Cholesterol, mg</b>	<b>58.000</b>	<b>83.000</b>	<b>77.000</b>	<b>70.000</b>

\*Source: Handbook 8-5 (USDA, 1979)

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