

Helergon Kitchen

Panda Express Orange Chicken Copycat

15 min Prep time	**25 min** Cook time	**40 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**American-Chinese** Cuisine

Ingredients

Chicken and Batter

- [ ] 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breast (cut into bite-size cubes)
- [ ] 1 cup all-purpose flour
- [ ] ½ cup cornstarch
- [ ] 1 tsp baking powder
- [ ] ½ tsp salt
- [ ] ¼ tsp black pepper
- [ ] ½ cup cold water
- [ ] Oil for frying (vegetable or canola)

Orange Sauce

- [ ] 1 cup fresh orange juice
- [ ] ¼ cup soy sauce
- [ ] ¼ cup rice vinegar
- [ ] 2 tbsp honey
- [ ] 2 tbsp brown sugar
- [ ] 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- [ ] 1 tsp garlic, minced
- [ ] 1 tbsp orange zest
- [ ] 1 tsp sesame oil
- [ ] ¼ tsp red pepper flakes (optional for heat)

Sauce Thickener

- [ ] 1 tbsp cornstarch (for slurry)
- [ ] 1 tbsp cold water (for slurry)

Instructions

1. First, let's get our dry bits together. In a medium bowl, whisk together the 1 cup all-purpose flour, ½ cup cornstarch, 1 tsp baking powder, ½ tsp salt, and ¼ tsp black pepper until everything is evenly mixed. Simple enough, right?

2. Now, gradually stir in the ½ cup cold water. You're looking for a batter that's thick but still runny enough to dip. I usually let it rest for about 10 minutes—it just gives the flour a chance to settle, honestly.

3. Pat that 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breast (cut into bite-size cubes) dry. Then, just dredge each piece in the batter, give it a little shake to get rid of the excess, and set them aside on a wire rack or plate.

4. Heat your oil in a deep pan to 350°F (175°C). If you don't have a thermometer, oops, no worries—just drop a tiny bit of batter in; if it sizzles immediately, you're good to go.

5. Fry the chicken in batches for 4–5 minutes per side. You want them golden brown and crispy, reaching an internal temperature of 165°F. Use a slotted spoon to get them out and let them drain on paper towels to stay warm.

6. While the chicken is doing its thing, let's make the sauce. Combine the 1 cup fresh orange juice, ¼ cup soy sauce, ¼ cup rice vinegar, 2 tbsp honey, 2 tbsp brown sugar, 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated, 1 tsp garlic, minced, and 1 tbsp orange zest in a saucepan. Bring it to a gentle simmer over medium heat until the sugars dissolve.

7. Whisk your 1 tbsp cornstarch (for slurry) and 1 tbsp cold water (for slurry) together, then stir it into the simmering sauce. Cook for another 1–2 minutes until it thickens into a lovely, glossy glaze.

8. Stir in that 1 tsp sesame oil for a little depth, then take the pan off the heat.

9. Return the fried chicken to the saucepan and toss it all together until every piece is coated in that sticky orange sauce. Let it sit for 1–2 minutes—this part is key so the sauce really adheres.

10. Transfer everything to a serving platter. If you're feeling fancy, garnish with sliced green onions and toasted sesame seeds. Serve it immediately over steamed rice, and wow, just enjoy it.

Nutrition per serving

520 kcal	32 g	48 g	22 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- Fresh orange juice makes a world of difference in brightness compared to bottled.
- Letting the batter rest for 10 minutes helps the texture of the coating.
- Always drain fried chicken on paper towels to keep it from getting soggy.