



Buffalo Chicken Wings

MAKES 24 TO 28 HORS D'OEUVRES
ACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR ■ START TO FINISH: 1¾ HOURS

■ Though common to cuisines around the world, chicken wings didn't really take off in the United States until the early 1960s. Their flight to fame is credited to Teresa and Frank Bellissimo, the owners of the Anchor Bar in Buffalo, New York. Mrs. Bellissimo, in an ingenious attempt to use up an overabundance of wings at the restaurant, deep-fried them, tossed them in her husband's hot sauce and melted butter, and served

them with celery sticks and blue cheese dressing on the side—a cool, creamy antidote to the spicy blaze of the wings. Their bar food eventually spread across the country. You can deep-fry our wings à la Anchor Bar, but we think they're just as delicious grilled. ■

FOR BLUE CHEESE DIP

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup plain yogurt
- 2 ounces blue cheese, crumbled (½ cup)

FOR CHICKEN WINGS

- 3 pounds chicken wings, split at joint and wing tips discarded
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil if grilling, about 6 cups vegetable oil if deep-frying

SALT

Table salt, kosher salt, and rock salt all come from salt mines, whereas sea salt is obtained by evaporating seawater. Some manufacturers add iodine to salt, for nutritional reasons, as well as free-flowing agents to prevent the crystals from clumping together.

TABLE SALT has small crystals. When iodine has been added, it's called iodized salt. In our recipes, when we call for just "salt," we mean table salt.

KOSHER SALT is preferred by many chefs because it's easy to grab when making a dish and doesn't dissolve on the fingers. It may or may not have additives, depending on the brand. When applied to salt, the word *kosher* doesn't mean kosher in the usual sense of conforming to Jewish dietary laws. (All salt, coarse or fine, is considered pareve—neither animal nor dairy.) Rather, it means that the salt is of a coarseness suitable for koshering meat and poultry. (One part of the koshering process is salting the meat to remove as much blood as possible. If the salt is too fine, it dissolves on the surface; if it is too coarse, the flakes or pellets won't draw out enough blood.)

ROCK SALT, usually found in hardware stores and used for melting snow, is very coarse grayish salt. Because it isn't manufactured under the same standards as table, kosher, and sea salts, it isn't FDA-approved for culinary use.

SEA SALT, available in coarse or fine crystals, comes from seawater that has been allowed to evaporate naturally. Depending on the brand, iodine and free-flowing agents may have been added. Most of the sea salt sold in the United States is imported. The most famous kind is from France's Brittany region. According to Mark Kurlansky, the author of *Salt: A World History*, Brittany's *sel gris* acquires its distinctive color when salt crystals sink to the gray earth at the bottom of the salt ponds. *Fleur de sel* is not *sel gris* washed white; it's lightweight crystals that float to the ponds' surface and are skimmed off. Other sea salts include Maldon, harvested in England since the Middle Ages; Anglesey, from Wales; Sicilian salt, from the huge salt flats at Trapani; Korean salt, which is roasted in bamboo cylinders; pink Hawaiian salt, harvested from clay salt pools; and black Hawaiian salt, from lava-lined pools.

Sea salt can add not just flavor but a spiky crunch to food, so it is best used as a garnish or condiment. Big, almost shardlike crystals of Maldon salt are delicious, for example, sprinkled on a tomato sandwich or grilled fish. If you do want to cook with sea salt (for some reason, greens seem especially delicious when cooked with *fleur de sel*), be aware that you can't substitute measure for measure (particularly in baking) if a recipe calls for table or kosher salt, so err on the cautious side.

Salt

- 1/2 stick (4 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- 3–4 tablespoons hot sauce, such as Frank's or Goya
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cider vinegar

ACCOMPANIMENT: celery sticks, soaked in a bowl of ice and cold water for 30 minutes and drained

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: a deep-fat thermometer if frying

MAKE THE DIP: Whisk together mayonnaise and yogurt in a small bowl, then stir in blue cheese (dip will not be smooth).

TO GRILL THE WINGS: Prepare a charcoal or gas grill: If using a charcoal grill, open vents in bottom of grill, then light charcoal. Fire is medium-hot when you can hold your hand 5 inches above rack for just 3 to 4 seconds. If using a gas grill, preheat on high, covered, for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to moderately high.

Pat wings dry and put in a bowl. Rub 2 tablespoons oil onto wings and season with salt. Lightly oil grill rack and grill wings, uncovered, turning once, until cooked through and golden brown, 16 to 20 minutes total. Transfer to a platter.

TO DEEP-FRY THE WINGS: Heat 1 1/2 inches oil in a 5- to 6-quart deep heavy pot over high heat until it registers 380°F on thermometer. Pat 6 or 7 wings dry, carefully lower into oil, and fry, stirring occasionally, until cooked through, golden, and crisp, 5 to 8 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Fry remaining wings in same manner. (Return oil to 380°F between batches.)

COAT THE WINGS: Melt butter in a 12-inch skillet over moderately low heat. Stir in hot sauce, vinegar, and salt to taste. Add grilled or fried wings and toss to coat.

Serve wings warm or at room temperature, with dip and celery sticks.

COOK'S NOTE

- The dip can be made up to 8 hours ahead and refrigerated, covered.



“La Brea Tar Pit” Chicken Wings

MAKES 48 HORS D'OEUVRES

ACTIVE TIME: 15 MINUTES ■ START TO FINISH: 2 HOURS

■ It's easy to understand why chicken wings are so popular (as if all that crisp skin weren't enough of a reason). Economical and sold in just about every market, they capture the essence of relaxed entertaining: it's hard to stand on ceremony while eating with your fingers. Anyone who has ever visited the La Brea tar pits in Los Angeles will understand how this great-tasting hors d'oeuvre got its name. The recipe came to us from reader Metta Miller, from Boston, and it's a staff favorite. ■

- 4 pounds chicken wings, split at joint and wing tips discarded
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

Put a rack in middle of oven and preheat oven to 400°F.

Arrange wings in one layer in a large roasting pan.

Combine remaining ingredients in a small saucepan and heat over moderately low heat, stirring, until sugar is dissolved. Pour evenly over wings.

Bake for 45 minutes. Turn wings over and bake until sauce is thick and sticky, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes more. Transfer wings to a platter.

Chicken Saté with Peanut Curry Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 10 HORS D'OEUVRES

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MINUTES ■ START TO FINISH: 1 1/2 HOURS

■ All the ingredients for these Southeast Asian skewers of grilled chicken are easy to find. We particularly love the sauce. It's not made in the usual way, with peanut butter, but with coconut milk and ground-up peanuts,