

# 50 Ways to Feed Your Muscles

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Men's Health

Every family argues about what to eat for dinner. But the Shrader family of Bluebell, West Virginia, took dinner-table combat to a whole new level last summer when 49-year-old Jackie Lee and his son, Harley Lee, 24, whipped out .22-caliber pistols and exchanged fire after sparring over how to cook their meal.

What food could trigger a kitchen gun battle? The harmless, boneless, skinless—and often flavorless—chicken breast, that's what.

Sure, this omnipresent cut of poultry is the leanest source of protein this side of tofu or fish—a single serving offers 26 grams of protein for the price of 1 gram of saturated fat. But it's boring as hell. And it doesn't help that most people eat their annual average of 88 pounds one of two ways: soaked in Italian salad dressing or slathered in barbecue sauce.

In my mind, that's exactly how I hear the Shrader feud erupting. "Marinade!" one might have said. "No! Barbecue sauce," the other yelled. Back and forth it went until it came to blows, then bullets. (Harley Lee took a slug to the head, but managed to survive.)

That's why I came up with this list—not one, not two, but 50 different ways to prepare a chicken breast. What good is eating healthy food if the boredom nearly kills you?

## **STIR-FRYING**

Basic technique: Cut the raw chicken into bite-sized pieces or thin strips. Cook them in a nonstick skillet or wok over medium-high heat for 3 to 5 minutes or until browned. Then add the remaining ingredients in the order listed. Cook for 5 more minutes, stirring frequently.

Tip: Sesame oil gives stir-fries their distinct flavor. Its nutritional profile is similar to that of olive oil (i.e., high in the unsaturated fats you want). But if you don't have sesame, use canola or peanut oil, since olive oil can burn at high temperatures.

1. 1 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce; 2 tsp sesame oil; 1/2 c green or red bell pepper, cut into strips; 1/4 medium onion, cut lengthwise into strips; 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
2. 1 Tbsp hoisin sauce; 2 tsp sesame oil; 1/3 c matchstick carrots; 1/3 c chopped celery; 1 green onion, sliced; 2 Tbsp chopped, unsalted peanuts
3. 1 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce; 2 tsp sesame oil; 1/2 c asparagus tips; 2 Tbsp chopped, unsalted cashews
4. 1 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce; 1 Tbsp lemon juice; 1 tsp lemon zest; 1 tsp honey; 1 clove garlic, crushed; 1/2 c snow peas; 1 c chopped celery

5. 1 whisked egg; 1/2 c (or more) chopped broccoli; 1/4 medium onion, cut lengthwise into strips; 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes; 1 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce

6. 1 whisked egg; 1/2 c snow peas; 1/2 c green or red bell pepper, cut into strips; 1/4 onion, cut lengthwise into strips; 1 Tbsp hoisin sauce

## **BAKING**

Basic technique: Preheat the oven to 350°F and bake the chicken breast for 20 to 25 minutes, or until an internal roasting thermometer reaches 170°. Don't overcook it. Err on the side of tenderness. An overcooked, dried-out chicken breast won't give you salmonella, but you probably won't want to eat it in the first place.

Tip: Quickly searing the breast in a hot skillet will help avoid dryness because it locks in the bird's juices.

## **Sauced**

Watery ready-made sauces like salsa will bake fine—some of the liquid will boil away as the chicken bakes. But thicker sauces, like barbecue or ranch, need water or broth mixed in, otherwise you'll be left with a sticky, blackened char.

Tip: Use a small baking dish to keep the meat covered with sauce.

7. 1/3 c salsa

8. 2 Tbsp jalapeño cheese dip, 2 Tbsp salsa, 1 Tbsp water

9. 2 Tbsp marinara sauce, 2 Tbsp water

10. 2 Tbsp barbecue sauce, 2 Tbsp water

11. 2 Tbsp ranch dressing, 2 Tbsp water

12. 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard, 2 Tbsp honey, 1 tsp olive oil

13. 3 Tbsp chicken broth; 1 Tbsp mustard; 1 clove garlic, crushed

14. 2 Tbsp condensed mushroom soup, 2 Tbsp water

15. 2 Tbsp pesto, 2 Tbsp reduced-sodium chicken broth

16. 2 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce, 1/4 c crushed pineapple with juice

17. 3 Tbsp chicken broth, 2 Tbsp light coconut milk, 1/4 tsp curry powder

18. 1/3 c chicken broth, 1 Tbsp maple syrup, 1 Tbsp apple juice

19. 3 Tbsp red wine vinegar; 1 Tbsp barbecue sauce; 1 clove garlic, crushed

20. 2 Tbsp hot sauce, 2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce, 1/4 tsp chili powder

21. 2 Tbsp lemon juice, 2 Tbsp orange marmalade, 1/4 tsp rosemary

### **Rubbed**

Rub one of the following spice mixtures evenly over each breast, then hit the chicken with a shot or two of cooking spray (not too much, though) to hold the rub in place and help form a light crust when cooking.

22. Tex-Mex style: 1/4 tsp each garlic powder, chili powder, black pepper, and oregano; pinch of salt
23. Southwestern: 1/4 tsp each black pepper, chili powder, red pepper flakes, cumin, and hot sauce
24. French: 1/4 tsp each dried basil, rosemary, and thyme; pinch of salt and pepper

### **Crusted**

A whisked egg acts like glue, holding the crust to the meat. It also gives your poultry a small protein boost. Crack one open in a shallow bowl, whisk it, and dip the chicken in it. Tip: Put your crust ingredients in a shallow plate instead of a bowl—it'll be much easier to coat the breast evenly.

25. Nut crusted: Dip the chicken in the egg, then roll it in 1/3 c nuts of your choice, finely chopped. Spray lightly with cooking spray.
26. Parmesan crusted: Dip the chicken in the egg, then roll it in a mixture of 1 Tbsp finely grated Parmesan cheese, 1 Tbsp Italian bread crumbs, and a pinch of black pepper.
27. "Like fried": Dip the chicken in the egg, then roll it in 1/2 c crushed cornflakes or bran flakes. Spray lightly with cooking spray.

### **Stuffed**

Relax, this isn't hard. First, pound the heck out of the chicken breast with a meat tenderizer or the heel of your hand—you want it to be uniformly thin. (Just be careful not to tear it.) Then, arrange your ingredients on the breast, roll it up, and secure it with toothpicks or kitchen twine so it doesn't come undone while it's baking.

28. 1 slice Cheddar cheese, 2 slices deli ham, 1/4 tsp black pepper
29. 1 slice mozzarella cheese; 3 slices pepperoni; 3 leaves fresh basil, chopped
30. 1 slice mozzarella; 1/4 c chopped tomatoes; 3 leaves fresh basil, chopped
31. 1 small handful baby spinach leaves, chopped; 1 Tbsp blue-cheese crumbles; 1 clove garlic, crushed
32. 1 slice mozzarella, 1 slice salami, 1 Tbsp chopped roasted red pepper
33. 1 1/2 Tbsp part-skim ricotta cheese, 1 Tbsp chopped sun-dried tomatoes, 1/4 tsp oregano
34. 1 1/2 Tbsp part-skim ricotta cheese, 1 Tbsp diced olives, 1/4 tsp lemon zest

35. 1 Tbsp pesto, 1 Tbsp shredded Parmesan cheese, 1/4 tsp black pepper

### **GRILLING, SEARING, OR GEORGE FOREMAN-ING**

Basic technique: Heat the grill, place a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat on the stove until it's hot, or power up the Foreman. Add the marinated chicken, cooking 3 to 5 minutes per side (6 to 8 total on the Foreman), or until an internal roasting thermometer reaches 170°F. The chicken doesn't stop cooking when you take it off the heat. If it's still hot, it's still cooking.

#### Marinades

Marinades need only about an hour or so to penetrate the meat. Whether you're cooking one chicken breast at a time or four at once, just mix the marinade ingredients well in a resealable plastic bag, drop in the chicken, seal, shake, and refrigerate.

Tip: If you're grilling, make a little extra marinade and reserve it in a separate bag or bowl. Brush it on the chicken during cooking to keep the meat moist.

36. 2 Tbsp bourbon, 1 tsp deli-style mustard, 1/4 tsp black pepper

37. 2 Tbsp bourbon; 1 tsp honey; 1 clove garlic, crushed

38. 2 Tbsp white wine; 1 clove garlic, crushed; 1/4 tsp thyme

39. 2 Tbsp red wine; 1 tsp barbecue sauce; 1 clove garlic, crushed

40. 2 Tbsp Coca-Cola, 1/4 tsp black pepper

41. 2 Tbsp balsamic vinaigrette, 1/4 tsp rosemary

42. 2 Tbsp lemon juice, 1/4 tsp lemon zest, 1/4 tsp black pepper

43. 2 Tbsp plain yogurt, 1/4 tsp dill

44. 2 Tbsp plain yogurt, 1 tsp olive oil, 1/4 tsp curry powder

45. 2 Tbsp lime juice, 1 tsp olive oil, 1/4 tsp cilantro

46. 2 Tbsp lime juice, 1/4 tsp cumin, 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes

47. 2 Tbsp orange juice, 1/4 tsp powdered ginger, 1/4 tsp cilantro

48. 2 Tbsp orange juice, 1 Tbsp hoisin sauce, 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes

49. 1 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce, 1 tsp sesame oil, 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes

50. 2 Tbsp pineapple juice; 1 clove garlic, crushed; 1/4 tsp black pepper