

## Hearty Handhelds

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

6:30pm CT

### What to expect in your cooking class:

My classes are a place where curious home chefs and their families can learn new cooking skills and grow confidence in the kitchen. I want to help you become the hero of your mealtime. I will verbally guide you through every step - starting from prepping ingredients, cooking steps until your dishes are complete and plated. I will be cooking alongside you, sharing instructions, tips and tricks throughout class.

*Your class is your time to ask me questions, ask for feedback, learn a little something and most importantly, have fun!*

### How to prepare for your class:

- For class, simply purchase your ingredients & gather your kitchen equipment from the following recipes. For a more relaxed class, prep your ingredients ahead of time (chopping, measuring). This is not required, however, as I will guide you through every step of preparation. Kitchen tools are **bolded** in each recipe.
- Shop for ingredients intuitively. If there are any ingredients featured in this recipe that aren't your favorite or not available in your local market, not to worry! Have the ingredients you enjoy or ingredients you were able to source available for class and let me know what you do have on hand for your dish. I will guide you through the preparation and cooking steps.
- Before your class starts, it's important that you have a solid internet connection, limited background noises and distractions, and are in a brightly-lit kitchen.
- I will want to see your work and cook stations as much as possible. Try to prop your device on a stack of cookbooks or use a tripod to give a good view to me.

## Nashville Hot Chicken Tenders

### Ingredients:

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken tenders

1 **cup** all-purpose flour

2 **Tbsp** Nashville spice blend (*1 tbsp chili powder, 1 tbsp onion powder, 1 tbsp smoked paprika, 1 tbsp cayenne pepper, 1tbsp garlic powder, 1 tsp black pepper, 2 tbsp brown sugar, 1 tsp kosher salt*)

### Dredging

3 cups all-purpose flour

½ cup cornstarch

1 **tsp** baking powder

¼ cup Nashville spice blend

2 eggs

6-8oz sparkling water

Frying oil

### Instructions

Prepare your frying oil and preheat to 375 F.

Stir together all the ingredients for the Nashville spice blend.

In a **large bowl** add the chicken tenders, 1 cup of flour and 2 Tbsp of spice mix. Toss to coat all the tenders and then set aside while you prepare the rest of the breading mixture and allow the chicken tenders to dry out.

To another **large bowl** add the 3 cups of flour, cornstarch, baking powder and spice blend. Whisk together then transfer half of this flour mixture to another **large bowl**. Crack in two eggs to this second bowl of flour along with 6 oz of sparkling water, whisk to create the wet batter, adding more water if necessary to create a batter the same consistency as pancake or crepe batter. Set aside.

To Fry: Dip the tenders into the wet batter and coat, then toss them into the dry flour mixture, then back into the wet and lastly again in the dry. Shake off any excess batter and fry in the preheated oil for 6-8 minutes until golden brown and crispy. Remove to a **sheet tray lined with paper towels or a wire rack** and continue to fry all the tenders.

Place the remaining Nashville spice blend into a **heat proof bowl** and carefully add hot frying oil to it, just enough to create a coating for the tenders (about ¼ cup). Dip the fried tenders into the seasoned hot oil and serve with ranch of the side

## Patty Melt Sliders

### Ingredients:

1 lb ground beef (80/20 lean is recommended)  
1 large yellow onion, thinly **sliced**  
4 tbsp butter, divided  
Salt and pepper to taste  
8 oz Swiss or American cheese slices, quartered  
1 loaf cocktail (mini) rye bread  
Dash of Worcestershire sauce

### Instructions

In a **large skillet** or frying pan, melt 2 tablespoons of butter over medium-low heat. Add the thinly sliced onions and season with salt and pepper. Cook slowly for 20–25 minutes, **stirring** occasionally, until the onions are soft and golden brown. Set the onions aside on a **plate**.

In the same skillet over medium-high heat, cook the ground beef, breaking it up with a **spatula** as it browns. When the beef is cooked through, season with salt, pepper, and a dash of Worcestershire sauce. If there is excessive grease, drain it from the pan.

Add a few of the cheese quarters to the pan with the chopped beef, stirring until the cheese is just beginning to melt and incorporate into the meat. Remove the chopped beef and cheese mixture from the pan and set it aside with the onions.

Lay out the slices of mini rye bread. For each patty melt, you will use two slices. Spread softened butter on one side of each slice of bread.

Place half of the slices in a **clean skillet or griddle**, butter-side down, over medium heat. Top each piece of bread with a quartered slice of cheese. Spoon a small amount of the chopped beef and cheese mixture onto the cheese.

Top with a spoonful of the caramelized onions. Add another quartered slice of cheese and finish with a second slice of mini rye bread, butter-side up.

Grill the sandwiches until the bottom slice is golden brown and toasted, about 2–3 minutes. Add more butter to the pan before **flipping** and cooking the other side until it's also toasted and the cheese is fully melted. Transfer the finished mini patty melts to a cutting board. If desired, you can slice each in half diagonally before serving them hot.

## Cubano (Bonus Recipe!)

### Ingredients:

1 loaf Cuban bread, French bread, Italian bread, or 4 individual 7-inch loaves  
1/4 **cup** yellow mustard  
1/4 cup mayonnaise  
1 pound sliced cooked ham  
1 pound sliced roasted pork  
1/2 pound sliced Swiss cheese  
6 dill pickles, sliced, or 16 sandwich sliced pickles  
Cooking spray, for the pan

### Instructions

Heat a **griddle or large cast-iron** or other heavy-duty pan to medium heat. **Cut** 1 loaf of Cuban bread into quarters and slice each quarter in half horizontally. If using individual loaves, slice them in half lengthwise.

**Spread** yellow mustard and mayonnaise on the bread. Use one condiment per slice of bread, but be sure each sandwich has both.

Assemble each sandwich by layering sliced ham, sliced pork, sliced Swiss cheese, and sliced dill pickles.

Lightly coat the cooking surface of a griddle or skillet with cooking spray. Heat the pan about 1 minute. Place the sandwiches on the hot surface.

Put a **clean, heavy skillet** on top of the sandwich to flatten it. The goal is to press the bread down to about 1/3 of its original size. Leave the skillet on top of the sandwich and grill for 1 to 2 minutes. If you don't have a heavy skillet, use a brick wrapped in foil.

Lift the heavy skillet, **turn** the sandwich over and grill on the other side. Place the skillet back on top. For the sandwich to be ready, the cheese should be melted and the bread golden brown. Slice each sandwich in half diagonally and serve.

*Tasty variations: Use butter instead of mayo and mustard; add lettuce and tomatoes after the sandwich has been grilled; add a salty salami or bacon.*