

Juicy Chicken Meets Crunchy Coating in These Addictive Homemade Poppers

Here's exactly how I make them and how you can get them perfect every time.



OVEN
350°F

TIME
15 to 20 min

METHOD
Air fryer

PRINT
Recipe Card

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon onion powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon smoked paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce (optional)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 2 cups vegetable oil
- Ranch dressing
- Honey mustard
- Spicy sriracha mayo

DIRECTIONS

- Step 1: Mix the Chicken Filling** I dice the chicken into small pieces, about the size of a blueberry. In a large bowl, I mix the chicken with mozzarella, cheddar, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, salt, black pepper, and hot sauce. Once it's well combined, I scoop the mixture and shape it into small balls - about an inch wide.
- To help them hold together when frying, I place the tray of shaped chicken balls in the freezer for 15 to 20 minutes. This firms them up just enough without fully freezing.
- Step 2: Set Up the Dredging Station** I grab three shallow bowls. One gets the flour mixed with salt and pepper. The second holds the beaten eggs. The third has panko breadcrumbs mixed with Italian seasoning and a little cayenne pepper for optional heat.
- Each chicken ball gets rolled first in flour, then dipped in egg, then coated in panko until fully covered.
- Step 3: Fry to Crispy Perfection** I heat the vegetable oil in a deep pan to about 350°F. Working in batches, I gently lower the poppers into the oil and fry for 3 to 4 minutes, turning as needed so they cook evenly. Once they're golden and crisp, I remove them and place them on a paper towel to drain.
- Step 4: Serve with Sauce** I serve these while they're still hot with a trio of sauces for dipping. Ranch is always a classic, but the spicy sriracha mayo is my personal favorite. The contrast of the warm, cheesy center with a cool creamy dip is unbeatable.

