

Easy Instant Pot Sweet and Sour Chicken: Quick Takeout Fakeout

Instant Pot Sweet and Sour Chicken recipe!



TIME
2-3 min

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INGREDIENTS

1.5 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 tablespoon vegetable oil or other neutral oil
1 large bell pepper (red or green), cored and cut into 1-inch pieces
1/2 large red onion, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 (8-ounce) can pineapple chunks, drained (reserve 1/4 cup juice)
For the Sweet and Sour Sauce:
1/2 cup ketchup
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons soy sauce (low-sodium preferred)
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon ginger powder (or 1 tablespoon fresh grated ginger)
Reserved 1/4 cup pineapple juice
1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons cold water (for thickening)
For Serving:
Cooked rice (white or brown)
Fresh green onions, sliced (for garnish)
Sesame seeds (for garnish)

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare : Chicken: Cut chicken into 1-inch pieces.
2. SautØ Chicken (Optional but Recommended): Set your Instant Pot to SautØ mode. Add 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil. Once hot, add the chicken pieces in a single layer (you may need to do this in batches to avoid overcrowding). Sear for 2-3 minutes per side until lightly browned. This step adds depth of flavor but can be skipped for an even faster meal. Remove chicken and set aside.
3. Deglaze (If SautØed): If you sautØed the chicken, add a splash of water or chicken broth to the Instant Pot and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Press Cancel.
4. Whisk : Sauce: In a medium bowl, whisk together the ketchup, apple cider vinegar, brown sugar, soy sauce, garlic powder, ginger powder, and the reserved 1/4 cup pineapple juice.
5. Layer in : Instant Pot: Place the browned chicken (or raw chicken if you skipped sautØing) in the bottom of the Instant Pot. Pour the whisked sweet and sour sauce over the chicken. DO NOT STIR.
6. Add : Vegetables & Pineapple: Layer the bell pepper, red onion, and drained pineapple chunks on top of the sauce and chicken. Again, do not stir. This "layering" helps prevent the dreaded "BURN" notice.
7. Pressure : Cook: Secure the lid on the Instant Pot and set the vent to Sealing. Cook on Manual/Pressure Cook (High Pressure) for 5 minutes.
8. Quick : Release: Once the cooking time is complete, perform a Quick Release of the pressure by carefully turning the vent to Venting. Once the pin drops, open

the lid.

9. **Thicken : Sauce:** Carefully remove the chicken, vegetables, and pineapple from the Instant Pot with a slotted spoon and set aside. Press SautØ mode again. In a small bowl, whisk together the cornstarch and cold water until smooth. Slowly pour the cornstarch slurry into the simmering sauce in the Instant Pot, whisking continuously, until the sauce thickens to your desired consistency (this usually takes 1-2 minutes).
10. **Combine & : Serve:** Return the chicken, vegetables, and pineapple to the thickened sauce in the Instant Pot. Toss gently to coat everything. Serve immediately over cooked rice, garnished with sliced green onions and sesame seeds.

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken : Chicken thighs will yield a juicier, more tender result.

If you use breasts, be careful not to overcook them.

You can also use pork tenderloin for a different protein.

Vegetables : Feel free to customize!

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Stir Before Cooking : For Instant Pot recipes with thicker sauces, layering ingredients (sauce on bottom, then meat, then vegetables on top) helps prevent the "BURN" notice.

Stirring combines ingredients in a way that can make the bottom too thick.

Quick Release is Key : For tender chicken and vibrant vegetables, a quick release of pressure is essential to stop the cooking process promptly.

Adjust Sweetness/Sourness : Taste your sauce before and after cooking.

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