

Best Smoked Chicken Legs Recipe: My Secret for Juicy, Flavorful Legs

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional, for a little heat)



OVEN
225°F

TIME
15 min

TEMP
175°F

METHOD
Air fryer

INGREDIENTS

10-12 chicken legs

For the Dry Rub:

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 tablespoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon onion powder

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional, for a little heat)

For the Smoker:

Wood chips of your choice (hickory, apple, or cherry wood works well)

Water pan

Swaps and Notes:

Chicken: Chicken legs are my preference here because they are a very forgiving cut of meat. You can also use bone-in chicken thighs.

Dry Rub: The dry rub is the key to the flavor of these chicken legs! Don't be afraid to adjust the spices to your liking.

Wood Chips: Hickory, apple, and cherry wood are great choices for chicken. They provide a beautiful smoky flavor without being too overpowering.

Sauce (Optional): You can also finish these chicken legs with a brush of your favorite BBQ sauce during the last 15 minutes of smoking.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Prep the Chicken: Pat the chicken legs completely dry with a paper towel. This is a crucial step for getting a crispy skin.

Make the Dry Rub: In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, smoked paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper (if using).

Rub the Chicken: Rub the dry rub generously all over the chicken legs.

Prep the Smoker: Prepare your smoker according to the manufacturer's instructions, preheating it to a temperature between 225°F and 250°F (107°C to 121°C). Add your wood chips and water to the water pan.

Smoke the Chicken: Place the seasoned chicken legs directly on the smoker grate. Smoke for 2-3 hours, or until the internal temperature of the chicken reaches 175°F to 180°F (79°C to 82°C). This higher temperature is key for chicken legs, as it allows the connective tissue to break down, resulting in a more tender and juicy bite.

Rest and Serve: Once cooked, remove the chicken legs from the smoker and let them rest for 5-10 minutes. This allows the juices to redistribute.

Serve: Serve the smoked chicken legs hot.

Tips for Success:

Pat Them Dry: Patting the chicken legs completely dry before applying the rub is the most important tip for getting a crispy skin.

Don't Overcook: While chicken legs are very forgiving, you still want to watch the internal temperature. The higher temperature range (175-180°F) is what makes them so tender.

Use a Water Pan: The water pan in the smoker helps to keep the chicken moist and tender.

Use an Internal Thermometer: An internal meat thermometer is the best way to ensure your chicken is cooked perfectly.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (per serving, approximate):

Calories: 350 kcal

Carbohydrates: 5g

Protein: 30g

DIRECTIONS

1. **Prep the : Chicken:** Pat the chicken legs completely dry with a paper towel. This is a crucial step for getting a crispy skin.
2. **Make the : Dry Rub:** In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, smoked paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper (if using).
3. **Rub the : Chicken:** Rub the dry rub generously all over the chicken legs.
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8. **Tips for Success: Pat Them Dry:** Patting the chicken legs completely dry before applying the rub is the most important tip for getting a crispy skin.
9. **Don't : Overcook:** While chicken legs are very forgiving, you still want to watch the internal temperature. The higher temperature range (175-180°F) is what makes them so tender.

10. Use a : Water Pan: The water pan in the smoker helps to keep the chicken moist and tender.
11. Use an : Internal Thermometer: An internal meat thermometer is the best way to ensure your chicken is cooked perfectly.
12. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: These Smoked Chicken Legs are a perfect main course. They pair beautifully with classic BBQ sides like coleslaw, potato salad, or baked beans. You could also serve them with a side of cornbread. The rich, savory flavors would also go great with other hearty, comforting meals like a classic Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo or some easy cheesy chicken sliders.
13. Nutritional Information (per serving, approximate):
Calories: 350 kcal
14. Carbohydrates: 5g
15. Protein: 30g
16. Fat: 20g
17. Saturated : Fat: 5g
18. Cholesterol: 100mg
19. Sodium: 600mg
20. Fiber: 1g
21. Sugar: 4g
22. Disclaimer: Nutritional values are estimates and can vary based on specific ingredients and portion sizes.
23. Storage and Leftover Tips: Leftovers of these chicken legs are fantastic! Store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. To reheat, you can pop them in a hot oven or air fryer for a few minutes to crisp them back up.
24. More Recipes You'll Love: If you enjoy easy, savory, and satisfying comfort foods, you might also like these other recipes:
25. These : Easy Turkey Wings are my favorite comfort food for lazy Sundays

SWAPS & NOTES

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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