

MEALTIME HELPER

MAKING MEALTIME EASY

Chicken Tenders - Recipe

Prep time: 15 minutes (plus 15–30 minutes chilling, optional)

Cook time: 12–18 minutes (pan fry) — 18–25 minutes (oven baked)

Total time: 27–45 minutes (depending on method and chilling)

Servings: 4 (about 12 tenders)

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds (680 g) chicken tenderloins or chicken breasts cut into strips
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup (120 g) all purpose flour
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons milk or water
- 1 1/2 cups (150 g) panko breadcrumbs (or regular breadcrumbs)
- 1/2 cup (50 g) grated Parmesan (optional, for extra flavor)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika (or regular paprika)
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano or Italian seasoning
- Vegetable oil or canola oil for frying (about 1/4–1/2 cup) — or oil spray for baking
- Lemon wedges, for serving (optional)
- Dipping sauces: honey mustard, BBQ, ranch, or spicy mayo

Directions

1. **Prep the chicken:** Pat chicken tenderloins dry with paper towels. Season lightly with salt and pepper. If using chicken breasts, slice into 1 inch wide strips.
2. **Set up dredging station:** Place the flour in a shallow dish and season with a pinch of salt and pepper. In a second shallow dish whisk together eggs and milk (or water). In a third shallow dish combine panko, Parmesan (if using), garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, and dried oregano.

3. **Coat the tenders:** Working one at a time, dredge each chicken strip in flour (shake off excess), dip into the egg mixture, then press into the panko mixture until well coated. Place on a wire rack or tray. For extra crisp results, let coated tenders rest 10–20 minutes in the fridge to firm up.
4. **Pan fry method (crispiest):**
 - Heat a large skillet over medium high heat and add enough oil to coat the bottom (~1/4 inch). When the oil is hot and shimmering, add tenders in a single layer (do not overcrowd; work in batches).
 - Fry 3–4 minutes per side until golden brown and internal temperature reaches 165°F (74°C). Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and let rest a couple of minutes before serving.
5. **Oven baked method (lighter):**
 - Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Place coated tenders on a parchment lined baking sheet and lightly spray or brush tops with oil.
 - Bake 10–12 minutes, flip, then bake another 6–8 minutes until golden and cooked through (internal temp 165°F / 74°C). For extra crispness, broil 1–2 minutes at the end—watch closely.
6. **Air fryer method (fast + crisp):**
 - Preheat air fryer to 400°F (200°C) if required. Arrange tenders in a single layer (work in batches). Lightly spray with oil. Cook 8–10 minutes, flipping halfway, until golden and cooked through.
7. **Serve:** Transfer tenders to a platter, squeeze lemon if desired, and serve with your favorite dipping sauces.

Tips

- For seasoned flour, add 1/2 teaspoon paprika and 1/4 teaspoon cayenne to the flour for extra flavor.
- Use panko for a lighter, crunchier crust; regular breadcrumbs give a denser coating.
- To make these gluten free, use GF flour and GF breadcrumbs or crushed cornflakes.
- Make ahead: coat tenders and refrigerate for up to 8 hours before cooking; cooked tenders keep 3 days refrigerated and reheat well in the oven or air fryer.

Enjoy — crunchy on the outside, juicy on the inside. Perfect for weeknights, parties, or dipping contests.

