

# Easy Chile Crisp Chicken Katsu

by Michelle Schwinghammer | Denver Realtor by Day 🗝️ No nonsense cook by night. 🐱

🕒 40 minutes (+ Marinating and Resting Time) 🍽️ Serves 4 🌶️ A little spicy

Savory, tangy, crunchy, and perfect for any weeknight. These cutlets are the kind of dinner that feels way more impressive than the effort required. The secret is a chile crisp, soy, and red wine vinegar marinade that does double duty: it soaks the chicken and gets whisked into the egg wash too. Pre-toasting the panko before baking is the move — you get serious crunch without a drop of frying oil.

SIDES + STUFF: I served the katsu with a sprinkling of spring greens, tomatoes and green onions lightly dressed with sesame dressing. Alongside we heaped soy-sesame rice and lots of lemon wedges. The lemon cuts through the richness perfectly.

Two snaps! 🍷 🍷

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

3 tbsp chile crisp, plus more for serving  
3 tbsp soy sauce, plus more for serving  
3 tbsp red wine vinegar  
2 tbsp granulated sugar  
2 tsp kosher salt  
1¼–1½ lb boneless, skinless chicken thighs, flattened (you can use breasts if you want)  
1½ cups panko breadcrumbs  
½ cup all-purpose flour  
2 large eggs  
1–2 tbsp neutral oil (for toasting panko)

My tweaks: The original calls for chicken breasts, fried in a skillet. I used thighs (juicier, more forgiving — fight me) and baked instead of frying. The trick to getting a proper crust without the fryer? Toast your panko first!

## WHAT TO DO:

I. Make the marinade. In a medium bowl, whisk together the chile crisp, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and salt until dissolved. Add the chicken thighs and turn to coat. Let marinate at room temperature while you prep everything else, or cover and refrigerate for up to 8 hours if you're planning ahead.

2. Toast the panko. Heat 1–2 tablespoons of neutral oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the panko and stir constantly for 3–4 minutes until golden and fragrant. Watch it closely — it goes from golden to burnt fast. Transfer to a shallow dish and let cool.

3. Set up your breading station. Remove chicken from marinade and dry on paper towels. Put flour in one shallow dish, toasted panko in another, and whisk egg into the remaining marinade. Preheat your oven to 400°F and set a wire rack over a rimmed baking sheet.

4. Bread the chicken. One thigh at a time, dredge in flour, shake off the excess, dip in the eggy marinade, then press firmly into the toasted panko on both sides. Place on the wire rack. Repeat with remaining pieces. Let the breaded chicken sit on the rack for 20–30 minutes before baking. This helps the crust adhere and the flavors deepen. Not required, but worth the wait.

5. Bake. Bake at 400°F for about 30 minutes, until the crust is deep golden and the chicken is cooked through. No flipping needed — the wire rack lets air circulate underneath for an even crust all around. While the chicken fry/bakes, start your rice cooker and make a light/easy salad.

7. Serve. Serve the cutlet hot with extra chile crisp on the table and plenty of lemon wedges on the side.

*Inspired by “Chile Crisp Chicken Cutlets” — NYT Cooking / Christian Reynoso*