

A Sampling of Customer Favorite Cook and Eat Along Recipes!

by Tira Collins



COMFORT N SPICE
— PERSONAL CHEF SERVICE —



Introduction

Mealtime and cooking as a family, especially for Black people and African Americans, has always been viewed as much more than food preparation. Cooking and eating together has traditionally provided a means of establishing and maintaining relationships, cultivating joy, and reinforcing a support system. Memories and stories shared during meal time provide a transcendental experience. The shared experience of cooking and eating provides an opportunity to teach family members culinary independence, equip them with a “connection with the ancestors”, and to learn history and continue valued family traditions.

These traditions are the inspiration for the Comfort N Spice Cook and Eat Alongs. Different from most virtual cooking classes, Cook and Eat Along sessions are not focused on the instructor; the sessions are focused on the participants and their successful completion of a delicious food dish. Cook and Eat Alongs are designed to support cooks of different skill levels, various tastes and dietary preferences. Recipes are detailed and easy to follow. Participants learn tips and techniques for healthier eating as they connect with others via a virtual communal session of cooking, storytelling and memory sharing.

This booklet presents a few of the favorite recipes from these sessions. The recipes in this booklet are not as detailed as the “official” recipes but provide basic instructions and techniques. Join a Cook and Eat Along for step-by-step guidance, dietary variations, and lots of fun! [Comfortspice.com](https://www.comfortspice.com)



COOK AND EAT ALONG - CRISPY NO FRY CHICKEN

Put Down the Oil and No One Gets Hurt!

Recipe:

Crispy No-Fry Chicken with Roasted Asparagus

Meet people where they are! The best “diet” or meal plan is the one you follow. HealthIER eating tips are provided in each Cook and Eat Along. Participants are encouraged to adopt one or two tips/habits from each session. In this session, we made delicious, crispy chicken without any added oil. Participants also learned to understand poultry labels and how to purchase quality, healthier poultry. They also learned a healthier way to roast vegetables and a great homemade salt-free seasoning blend!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 T kosher salt, ground black pepper to taste, granulated garlic to taste, cayenne to taste your favorite salt-free Creole/Cajun, Greek or other Seasoning. I like Penzey's spices. Penzey's also has many salt free seasonings.
 - 1 bunch of fresh asparagus, washed, trimmed and dried.
 - Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVO)
- 4 5-6 oz bone in, skin on Air-Chilled chicken thighs. (Purchase quality chicken from a reputable supplier; purchase pieces uniform in size.)

Instructions

CHICKEN

- Preheat oven to 425degrees/400 if using convection.
- Make sure your chicken is at room temperature (remove from refrigerator ~20-30 mins prior to cooking).Pat chicken dry with paper towels and season both sides liberally with salt and pepper/other and/or Creole Seasoning. For best results (crisp skin), season the chicken the night before. Place the seasoned chicken UNCOVERED on a rack over a sheet pan.
- Place each thigh, skin side down in a large, oven proof skillet. Place the pan over medium-low heat and let the chicken cook, undisturbed for 5-8 minutes or until the skin has rendered its fat, has turned a light golden brown, and releases from the pan. Flip the chicken over so the skin side is up.
- Place the pan in the preheated oven and cook for another 20-25 minutes. Check the temperature of your chicken after 18 mins. Cook longer if needed; cook until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. Remove chicken from the oven and tent with foil. Let the chicken rest for 8-10 mins before cutting or serving. While the chicken is resting, make the asparagus.



Crispy Chicken with No Added Oil!

- TIP: During last 5-10 minutes of roasting, tuck roasted peppers, thinly sliced onions, and garlic/vegetables of your choice and/or cheese under the chicken skin.
- TIP: Take a few minutes to clean and sanitize your workplace after handling the chicken. Wash your hands and clean the counter and any items that may have come into contact with the chicken. Do not cross contaminate!

ROASTED ASPARAGUS

- Rub ~1 tsp-2 tsp of EVO across the surface of a sheet pan. Sprinkle a few pinches of kosher salt over the oil. Sprinkle the oil/pan with freshly ground black pepper to taste. (You can substitute the Creole/Cajun Seasoning for the salt and/or pepper if desired.) Adjust your oven heat to 400 degrees.
- Place asparagus on the sheet pan in a single layer. Gently roll the asparagus to lightly coat with the seasoned olive oil. Roast in the 400 degree oven for 4-8 minutes depending on the thickness of your asparagus.

COOK AND EAT ALONG - PAN ROASTED FISH/OTHER WITH SPICY VINEGAR AND FRESH HERBS

A Fish, A Chicken, and A Pig Walk into a Bar...



Recipe:

Pan Roasted Fish with Spicy Vinegar and Fresh Herbs

Most happy childhood memories involve food. Cooking and enjoying family meals and events with friends create traditions that are continually passed down to different generations. It is important for different generations to interact and develop lasting relationships and memories. Cook and Eat Alongs bring families and friends together regardless of physical location. In this particular session, participants not only learned a new recipe, we shared some of our favorite memories and family food traditions - some were quite unique (e.g., don't waste food - eat all parts of an animal - pig ear sandwiches anyone?)

INGREDIENTS:

CHILE VINEGAR

- 1/2-1 habanero chile, or Fresno chile, seeds removed, finely chopped (habanero makes a hotter vinegar.) Habanero and Fresnos have a nice fruity flavor even though they are hot. Adjust the amount per your taste.

- 1-2 medium garlic cloves, finely chopped (garlic to taste!)
- ½ cup unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1.5 Tbs brown sugar
- 1 tsp minced fresh ginger (or to taste)

FISH

- 4 6-ounce skinless fish fillets - white fish of your choice (e.g. snapper, black or white cod, Mahi, barramundi, catfish, tilapia, halibut, etc) OR boneless skinless salmon filets
- Salt and pepper
- 6-8 large basil leaves, chiffonade or tear into large pieces
- Note: Chicken filets or tenders, Tofu, Pork Tenderloin, Shrimp, Scallops, or Paneer or Halloumi also work well in this recipe!
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVO) for cooking

Instructions

SPICY VINEGAR

- Combine the chile, garlic, and ginger in a small container with a tight lid. Add the vinegar and sugar to the container. Cover tightly and shake until the sugar has dissolved. You may use a food processor or mini chopper to make this vinegar. If using an appliance, add sliced garlic, and ginger and pulse until loosely chopped but NOT minced. Add the vinegar and sugar and pulse to combine and dissolve the sugar. Set aside.

FISH

- Make sure your fish is DRY! Dry= crispy! My opinion, if the skin isn't crispy on a piece of fish, leave it behind! But skin is nutrient dense - make an effort to dry and cook it!
- Your fish should be at room temperature (remove from refrigerator ~20 mins prior to cooking). Pat it dry with paper towels and season both sides LIGHTLY with salt and a small amount of pepper/other.
- Drizzle the fish with a small amount of high heat oil ("light olive, avocado, etc.)
- Place a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook the fish one side at a time until golden brown - skin side first. You may



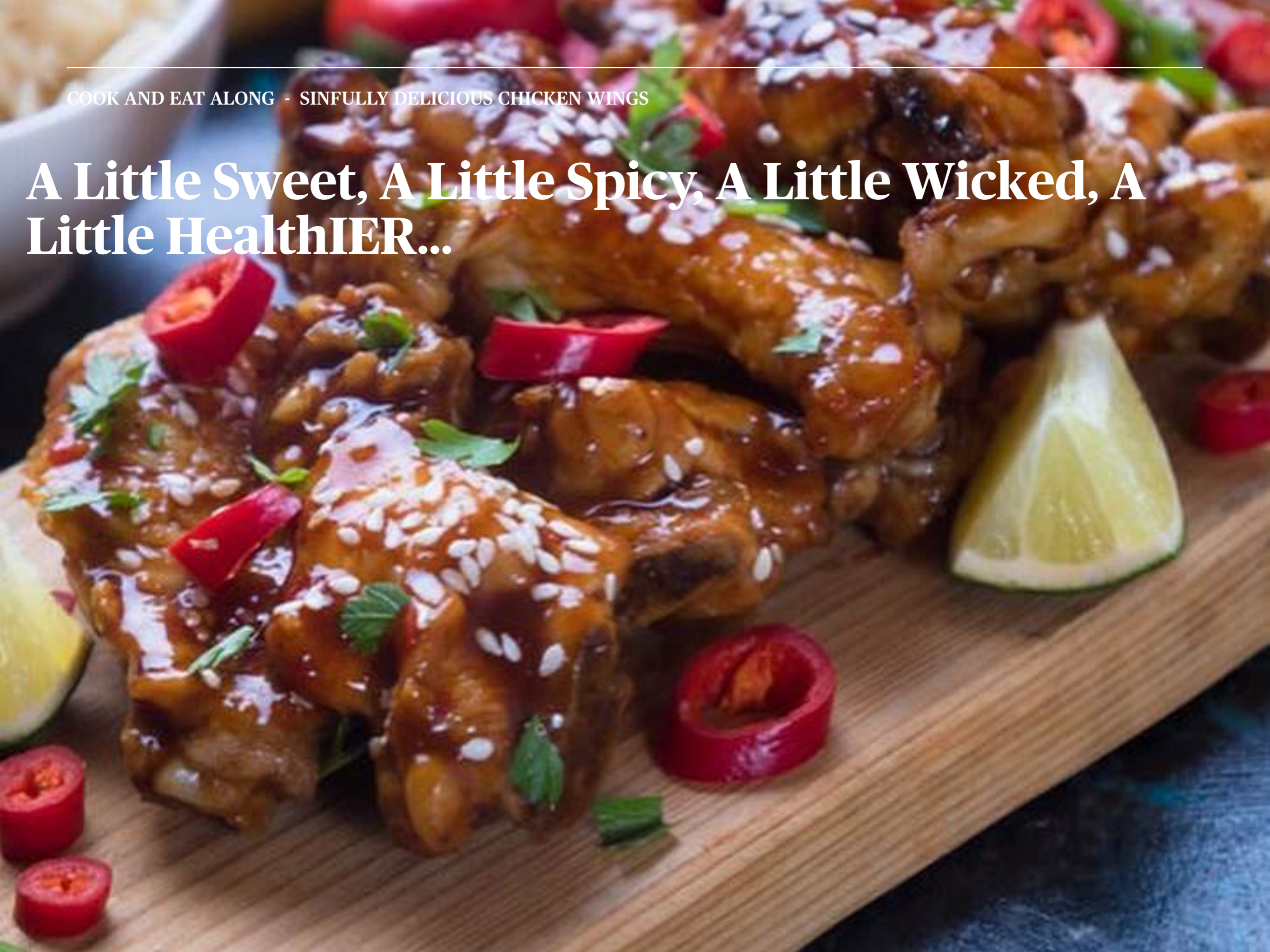
Pan Roasted Fish or Protein of Choice with Spicy Vinegar and Fresh Basil

lightly brown the fish on both sides and finish cooking it in a 400 degree oven if desired.

- When fish has finished cooking, tent it with foil and let it rest for a few minutes. Place warm protein on top of your favorite vegetables and top with the fresh basil. Drizzle with chile vinegar and enjoy!
- TIP: The vinegar is great on vegetables and grilled proteins - even grilled cheese!

COOK AND EAT ALONG - SINFULLY DELICIOUS CHICKEN WINGS

A Little Sweet, A Little Spicy, A Little Wicked, A Little HealthIER...



Recipe: Sinfully Delicious Chicken and Cauliflower Wings

Food is not just for our physical survival, it is also for our mental survival; it provides comfort. And cooking and eating with others is comforting and proven to provide physical, mental, and overall health benefits. Research shows that people who cook and eat with others maintain healthier eating habits, have a lower rate of obesity, have better cardiovascular and brain health, are less stressed, and generally have higher self-esteem. Plus, cooking and eating with others is FUN! Participants in this session enjoyed making an Asian Inspired recipe with chicken wings, cauliflower, and tofu. True comfort food - with spice! Variations for gluten-free and renal diets were provided.

INGREDIENTS:

GLAZE

- 1/4 cup sweet chili sauce
- 2 tablespoons low sodium soy or tamari sauce
1 tablespoon hot chili-garlic sauce, such as sriracha (more or less to taste)

- 2 teaspoons dark sesame oil
- 1-2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 1 tsp minced or grated lemongrass (optional)
- Squeeze of lime juice (optional)

CHICKEN WINGS

- 12 Air-Chilled chicken wings, split. Remove wing tips and save for stock making if desired.

Instructions

GLAZE

- Combine ingredients in a small bowl. Whisk well to combine. TIP: Grate the ginger, lemongrass (if using), and in a small food process and then add the remaining ingredients and blend. Pour glaze into a medium sized sauce pan. The pan must be large enough to dip and coat several wings at a time. Cook the sauce over medium low heat until it thickens. Turn off heat but keep warm by covering with a lid.

CHICKEN WINGS

- Preheat the oven to 450/425 degrees (lower temperature for convection or air fryer).
- Cover a sheet pan with nonstick foil or parchment paper. Lightly coat a wire rack or air-fry basket with a high heat oil such as canola, avocado, grape seed, etc. Place the rack over the prepared sheet pan. Set aside.
- Trim wings as needed and wipe dry with paper towels. Dry wings as much as possible! Place wings on the prepared rack/sheet pan. Make sure the wings are in a single layer. Do not crowd. For best results do this the night before and let the chicken "dry" in the refrigerator. Let come to room temperature before proceeding.



Asian Inspired Chicken or Cauliflower with a Sweet and Spicy Glaze

- Bake wings for ~25-35 minutes until crispy, turning over about halfway through cook time. Time will vary based on size of wings and appliance variations. Wings should be cooked to 165 degrees.
- Toss the wings in the warm, cooked sauce. Top with fresh herbs (e.g. cilantro, basil) if desired and serve immediately.

About Tira Collins and Comfort N Spice

In addition to coaching/consulting, cooking, and instructing, Tira's culinary experience includes commercial recipe development and trade show support for global food manufacturers; full service, high-touch fundraising and benefactor events; cooking instruction for private organizations; and developing food pairings for a local winery. In her spare time, Tira occasionally writes articles for local publications, donates meals and supports activities for dementia facilities and conducts in-home wine tastings in support of charity. She is fully insured, licensed, and nationally certified by ServSafe (Food Handler/Service Management certification for restaurants/commercial food handlers). Tira's academic background includes a B.S. in Mathematics from Xavier University, Louisiana, and a M.S. in Operations Research from Northwestern University. Tira completed her personal chef training in New Orleans and is a member of the American Personal and Private Chef Association

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