

Perennial favourites

There are some meals that get asked for time and time again by all kids. In this section we've brought together these perennial favourites, all of which are so easy to prepare and yet bring comfort and sustenance at any time of year.

Chicken nuggets

*'Every day I get the question, "What are we having for tea, Mum?" and I still get the **best reaction** when I say, "Chicken nuggets and chips"! When you make them yourself there is no guilt involved. They have **a lovely fun tea** they can eat with their fingers and I know they've had a **good home-cooked meal**.*

Everybody's happy, and that doesn't happen too often!

*'When I make **home-made fish fingers and chips** I serve them in little cones made of rolled up newspaper with kitchen roll inside. Just add the sound of the sea for a **traditional seaside supper!**' Christine, mum to Lauren and Callum*

This recipe can also very easily be adapted for fish fingers by swapping the chicken breast for equivalent white fish fillet (e.g. cod), cut into finger-sized pieces. Fish can be fresh or frozen and thawed, approx. 450g.

Serves 2–4 children

Suitable for ages 1 year +

* You can freeze after step 4, so long as the chicken hasn't been previously frozen

Nutrition  Fat  Saturates  Sugar  Salt

2 large chicken breast fillets, skin removed

2–3 slices stale white or brown bread

2–3 tbsp plain flour

1 medium egg, beaten and thinned with a little milk

a little light olive oil

1 Preheat the grill or the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.

2 Cut the chicken into bite-sized chunks or into strips for chicken fingers. Remove the crusts and whiz the bread in a blender to make crumbs (or crumb, using your fingertips), then tip them into a shallow bowl.

NUTRITION NOTE

Chicken breast is an ideal low-saturated fat protein for children. It is easily digested and is rich in most of the B vitamin group. It's also a great source of selenium, a mineral lacking in many kids' diets. If the nuggets are grilled or baked they stay low in fat. If you shallow-fry, use light olive oil or safflower oil, not blended vegetable oil.

SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve with vegetable hash browns or potato wedges (see pages 57 and 104), or just plain mash with mixed peas and carrots.

- 3 Put the flour and chicken in a large strong plastic bag and shake to coat the chicken. Now dip the nuggets into the egg mixture to coat, and finally into the breadcrumbs.
- 4 Gently brush with a little oil and cook under the medium hot grill for 10–12 minutes, turning once. Or bake in the preheated oven for 15–20 minutes, turning once. Or, don't brush with oil, but shallow-fry for a similar time then drain on kitchen paper.

Variations

Substitute the chicken with cod, haddock or salmon slices and make fish fingers with the same crumb mixture. The fish versions may take a little less cooking time. You could also use chunks of turkey breast.

Netmums member Ffion from Cardiff, who sent in the recipe, says:

*'Make this dish **even healthier** by adding **flaxseeds** or **chopped sunflower seeds** or **pine kernels** to the breadcrumb mixture for children over five (see *Allergies*, page 36). This gives it a **nice nutty flavour** and a bit of **crunchiness** – but don't overcook the bread coating as this will destroy the good omega oils in the seeds and may make them bitter. It's a **hit every time with my kids**, who can't stand the ready-made ones now!'*

*'You can **freeze home-made breadcrumbs** in plastic bags and they take **only minutes** to defrost.'* Jenni, Colchester

*'These are **very easy** to do in big batches so you can freeze what you don't need on the day for an **easy fast-food option** another teatime.'* Sal, Cardiff