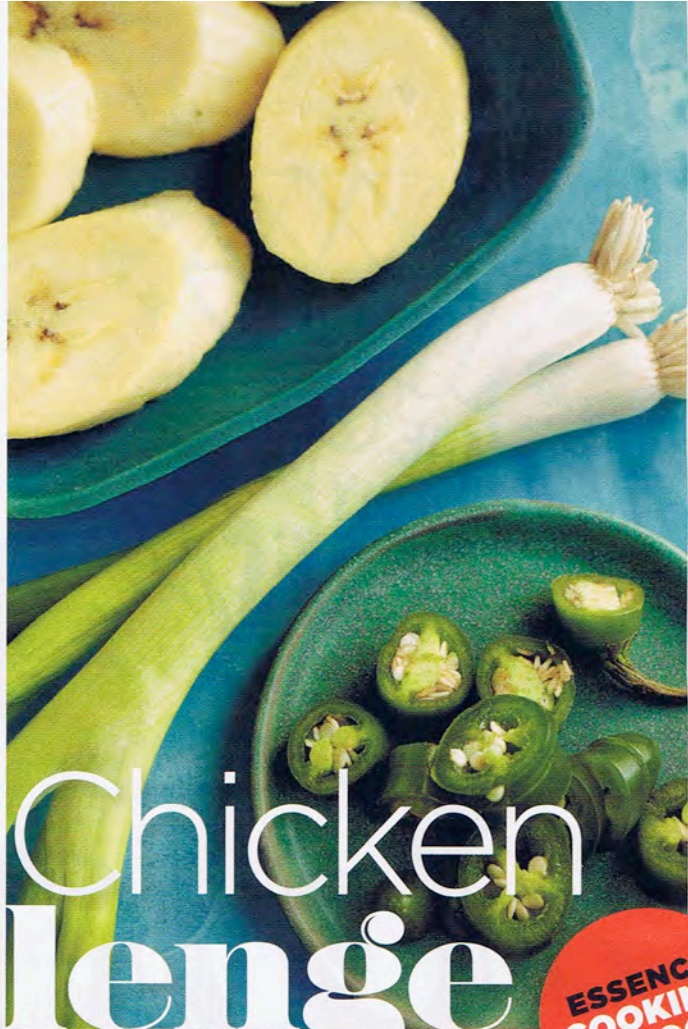


BODY & SPIRIT

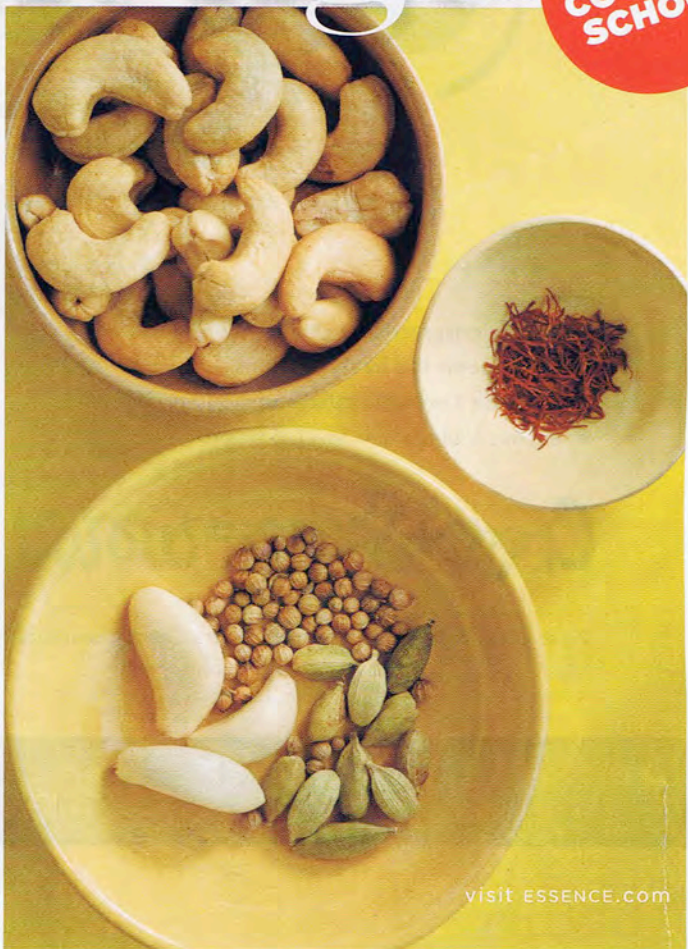
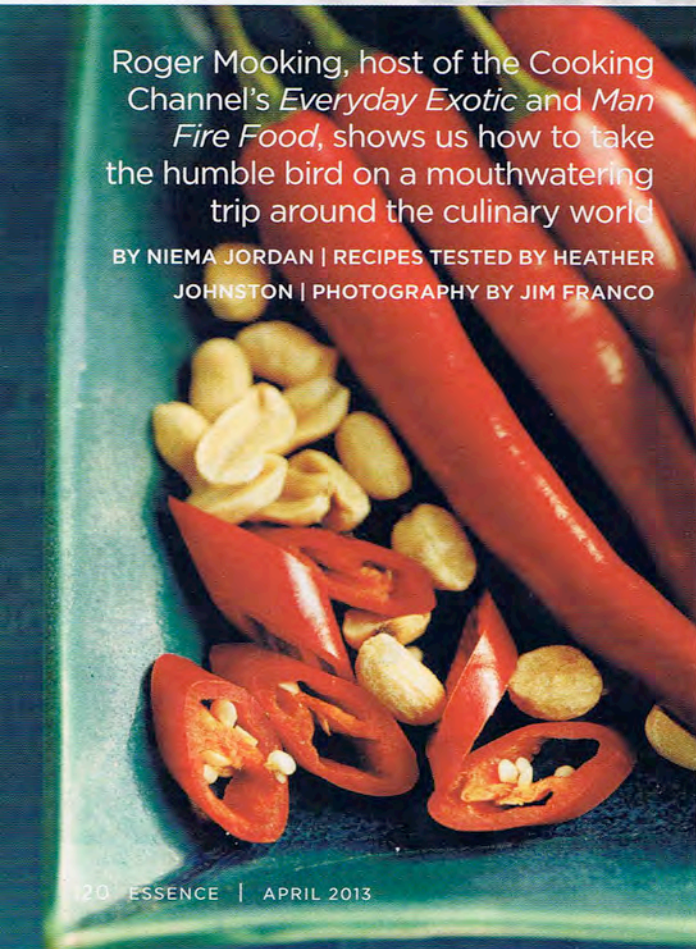


# the Chicken Challenge

ESSENCE  
COOKING  
SCHOOL

Roger Mooking, host of the Cooking Channel's *Everyday Exotic* and *Man Fire Food*, shows us how to take the humble bird on a mouthwatering trip around the culinary world

BY NIEMA JORDAN | RECIPES TESTED BY HEATHER JOHNSTON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM FRANCO



## Malaysia Peanut Butter Chicken Wings

**Makes 6 servings.**  
**Prep time: 15 minutes plus  
30 minutes to 24 hours  
marinating time**  
**Cooking time: 1 hour**

### MARINADE

- 2 cups smooth natural peanut butter
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- Zest of 1 lime
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup soy sauce
- ½ cup water
- Juice of 2 limes

- 24 chicken wings
- Peanut oil, for frying
- 2 red finger chiles, halved, seeded and sliced
- 5 tablespoons cornstarch
- Salt
- 2 shallots, peeled, halved and sliced
- 1 cup finely chopped toasted peanuts

Mix all marinade ingredients in a bowl and reserve. Score chicken wings, then place in bowl and massage in marinade. Refrigerate 30 minutes to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place wings on large baking tray lined with parchment paper and bake, turning them over halfway through the cooking time, until meat is cooked and the wings are crisp and golden brown, approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Fill large heavy-bottomed pot with enough oil to one third full. Heat until the oil is about 350°F (as read with a deep-fry thermometer). Line a baking tray with paper towel. Put chiles in a bowl, coat well with 2 tablespoons cornstarch and fry until golden. Remove chiles from the oil, place on a paper towel and season with salt, then set aside. Put shallots in



Make these tasty wings a day ahead and reheat.

a bowl, coat well with 3 tablespoons cornstarch and fry until golden. Remove from oil, place on a paper towel and season with salt. Then finely chop the chiles and shallots. Combine with chopped peanuts in a bowl and set aside. Scatter the peanut-chile crunch over the wings.

**Per serving:** 828 calories, 23g carbohydrate, 114mg cholesterol, 62g fat, 48g protein, 819mg sodium.

## India Cashew Spiced Chicken

**Makes 6 servings.**  
**Prep time: 15 minutes**  
**Cooking time: 25 minutes**

- 1 cup white onion, diced
- 1 cup whole cashews
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon coriander seeds
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 whole chicken, boneless and cut into cube-size pieces
- 3 cloves garlic
- 3 cups chicken stock
- Pinch of ground cardamom seeds
- Pinch of saffron threads
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Ground black peppercorns, to taste
- 4 cups baby arugula

In a food processor or high-power blender, puree onion, cashews and yogurt until smooth. Preheat a large, round, shallow pot to medium heat and add cumin, coriander and ginger until they give off a vibrant aroma. Working quickly, add oil and chicken to the pan and turn up to medium-high heat. Allow the chicken to brown slightly and absorb the spices before flipping and letting cook for about 1 minute. Reduce heat to medium-low and add garlic, stock, cardamom and saffron threads. Simmer

gently for 5 minutes. Add cashew mixture to pot and reduce to low temperature. Simmer gently for another 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Remove from heat. In a bowl large enough to hold all the chicken and sauce, place the baby arugula at the bottom. Add the finished chicken and sauce to the bowl. Just before serving, gently stir to combine arugula with the chicken and sauce.

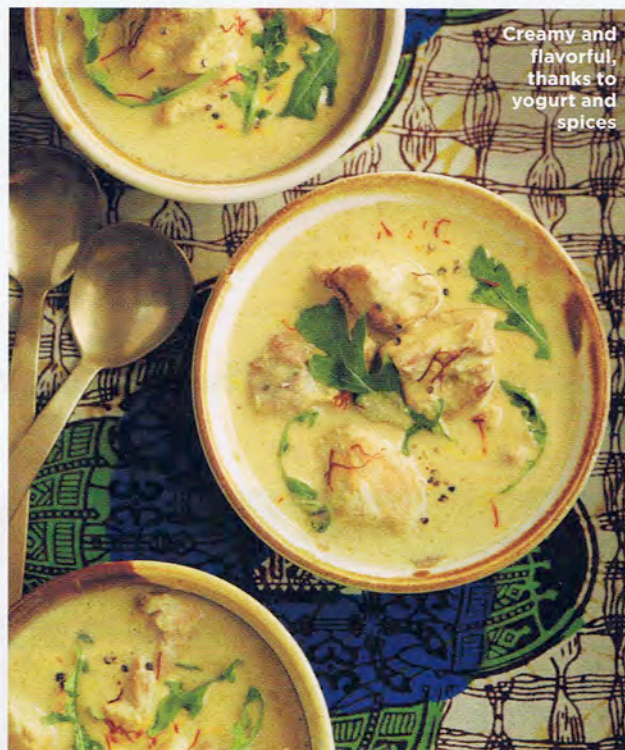
**Per serving:** 467 calories, 14g carbohydrate, 122mg cholesterol, 29g fat, 39g protein, 143mg sodium.

## The Caribbean Trinidadian- Style Chicken

**Makes 4 servings.**  
**Prep time: 15 minutes plus  
overnight to marinate**  
**Cooking time: 1 hour 10  
minutes**

### AMISE MARINADE

- 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 shallots, coarsely chopped
- Bunch green onions, trimmed and chopped ▸



Creamy and flavorful, thanks to yogurt and spices

Bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves and stems coarsely chopped  
 ½ cup vegetable oil

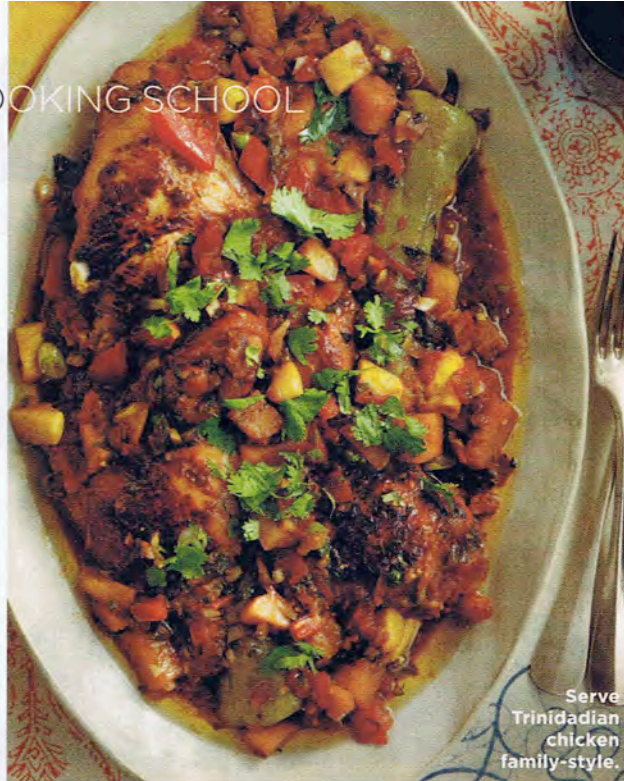
- 1 3-pound whole chicken, cut into pieces
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ white onion, cut into small dice
- 1 green chile, seeded and halved lengthwise, optional
- 1 unripe plantain, halved lengthwise and chopped
- Plum tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup chicken stock
- Kosher salt
- 1 cup fresh cilantro leaves

For the Amise Marinade, place garlic, shallots, onions, parsley and vegetable oil in a food processor and puree. Transfer garlic mixture to a container and set aside. Put chicken pieces in a bowl and add half of the marinade and cover. Let marinate in the refrigerator for a maximum of 24 hours.

In a wide-based pan, heat the sugar and vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Swirl until the sugar caramelizes and browns, approximately 7 to 10 minutes. Add chicken pieces in one layer skin side down and brown the chicken on all sides, approximately 5 minutes. Add onion, chile, plantain, tomatoes and Worcestershire sauce to the pan and stir. Pour in the chicken stock, and bring to a boil. Add reserved marinade and reduce heat to medium. Cook for 30 to 40 minutes, and season the dish with salt, to taste. Turn off heat.

Transfer chicken to a serving plate and garnish with the cilantro just before serving.

**Per serving:** 965 calories, 76g carbohydrate, 178mg cholesterol, 53g fat, 48g protein, 328mg sodium.



Serve Trinidadian chicken family-style.

## China/America Chicken Fingers With Blood Orange Sauce

**Makes 4 servings.**  
**Prep time: 30 minutes**  
**Cooking time: 35 minutes**

### BLOOD ORANGE RUB

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (6 ounces each), cut into strips
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- ½ tablespoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds, ground
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- Zest of 1 blood orange, chopped
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- 1 cup flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
- 2 eggs, whisked
- 2½ cups panko bread crumbs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### BLOOD ORANGE SAUCE

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ red onion, diced
- 1 cup honey
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- Zest of 2 blood oranges
- 4 blood oranges, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons cold water

- 8 fresh basil leaves, julienned

### BLOOD ORANGE WATERCRESS SALAD

- 2 blood oranges
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 bunch watercress, trimmed
- 2 cups roughly chopped iceberg lettuce
- ½ cup crushed rice crackers

Place chicken pieces in a large dish and add the garlic powder, pepper, ground fennel, oil and blood orange zest. Coat the chicken with the rub and place in the fridge for 30 minutes. Next preheat oven to 350°F. Fill a large pot one third full with the vegetable oil on the stove and heat to 350°F (as read with a deep-fry thermometer). Line a baking tray with a cooling rack. Place the flour, whisked eggs and panko into individual dishes. Sprinkle the chicken with salt and pepper. Dredge the chicken in the flour, followed by the eggs and then the panko bread crumbs. Place the breaded chicken on the prepared baking tray. In batches, place the chicken

strips in the oil and fry until crispy and golden. Place on a baking tray and keep warm in the oven. Repeat the process with the remaining chicken.

For the Sweet and Sour Blood Orange Dipping Sauce: Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the red onions and sweat until tender and translucent. Mix the honey, red wine vinegar and ½ cup water in a bowl. Add to the sauté pan and stir. Add the blood orange zest, blood orange pieces and cinnamon stick. Season with salt and pepper; stir and cook until the mixture has reduced by half. Strain the mixture through a sieve into a new pot over medium heat. Bring to a simmer and then remove from the heat. Continue to cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Place the pot back over medium heat, add the cornstarch mixture and bring to a simmer to cook the cornstarch out, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the basil.

For the Blood Orange Watercress Salad: Segment the blood oranges over a sieve and bowl to ensure all the juices are reserved; set the segments aside. Place the olive oil, red wine vinegar and shallots in the blood orange juice. Season with salt and pepper and stir. Place the watercress and iceberg lettuce on a serving plate. Spoon the blood orange dressing over the greens. Garnish with the blood orange segments and crushed rice crackers.

Serve the salad alongside the crispy chicken fingers with the blood orange sauce.

**Per serving:** 1,085 calories, 147g carbohydrate, 187mg cholesterol, 36g fat, 44g protein, 205mg sodium. □