

## **Chicken Cacciatore Appetizers with Marinara Dipping Sauce**

Why not surprise your family or upcoming holiday guests with a different twist on an old favorite! Most folks think Chicken Cacciatore can only be served as a main dish, but it makes for a wonderful appetizer, especially when chicken tenders. By adding a few ingredients to a jar of Marinara Sauce, you can have a delicious appetizer in a matter of minutes.

**2 pounds of chicken tenders or boneless and skinless breasts, cut into small chunks**

**Flour, for dredging, approximately 1 cup**

**Salt and freshly cracked pepper**

**1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, or more if needed**

**2 garlic cloves, minced, or more**

**1/4 -1/2 cup onion, diced**

**1 teaspoon dried fennel**

**1 Tablespoon dried Italian Seasoning**

**Fresh basil, minced**

**2- 26-ounce jar Marinara Sauce, your choice**

**Splash of red wine, optional, your choice**

**Salt and pepper, if needed**

**Bread, for dipping into sauce**

Place flour, salt and pepper in a zip-lock bag. Add cubed chicken tenders. Shake bag and coat Smart Chicken lightly.

In a large, heavy sauté' or cast iron skillet, coat bottom of pan with olive oil and turn on heat to medium-high. Working in batches, add the chicken tenders or breasts and sauté' just until brown. Transfer the chicken tenders to a serving plate. Cover with foil and set aside.

In a medium-size skillet, saute' garlic, fennel, onion and Italian seasoning. Saute' until garlic and onion are translucent, being very careful not to burn. Add jar of marinara sauce. Bring sauce to a simmer and let it simmer about 10 to 15 minutes. If using, add a splash of red wine and fresh basil and continue simmering for about five minutes. Taste sauce to see if additional salt and pepper is needed. If necessary, continue cooking the sauce until it thickens slightly, about 3 to 5 minutes more. Add chicken to Marinara Sauce and serve with sliced Italian, French or crusty bread. Keep Chicken Cacciatore heated in a crock pot.

Note: This recipe is wonderful served over your favorite pasta or rice.