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*Who says you can't play with your food!*

## Oven-Baked Chicken Fingers

*Recipe adapted from My Amazing Little Cookbook, produced by the Alberta Government's Healthy U program. For more family-friendly recipes, download a free copy of My Amazing Little Cookbook at <http://www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyEating/319.htm>*

2 chicken breasts, boneless & skinless, about 350 gr  
2 Tbsp (30 mL) plain, low-fat yogurt (not non-fat)\*  
12 salt-free soda or saltine crackers\*, crushed  
2 Tbsp (30 mL) Parmesan cheese  
1 tsp (5 mL) thyme  
1 tsp (5 mL) granulated onion\*  
1 tsp (5 mL) granulated garlic\*

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Cut each chicken breast into 8 to 16 pieces, trying to make them all about the same size.
3. In a medium bowl, combine yogurt and chicken strips. Stir gently, coating each strip completely.
4. In a shallow pan, combine the crackers, Parmesan cheese and spices.
5. Using tongs or a fork, place the chicken strips in the cracker mixture and coat them evenly.
6. Place coated chicken strips on a baking sheet lined with tin foil or baking parchment paper.
7. Bake about 25 to 35 minutes until cooked through and they are golden and crispy.

serves 4

### Variations:

- For more intense flavour, season the yogurt as well as the crumbs.
- Use any herbs & spices to season the crumbs - ready-made spice blends like Cajun, Italian, etc. are great.
- Use different flavours with the yogurt - add 1 tbsp of Dijon mustard (or) barbecue sauce (or) glaze.
- For "hot wings," marinate chicken in 2 or 3 tbsp of hot sauce for 1 hour before coating with the yogurt.
- Dairy issues? Omit the parmesan and replace the yogurt with 2 tbsp Dijon mustard.
- Try different crackers - Ryvita, rice crackers, etc.

### Tips:

- Do not use non-fat yogurt or indeed any yogurt whose ingredients include tapioca starch, guar gum, xanthan gum, carrageenan, etc. These ingredients are added to simulate thick and creamy yogurt by cutting back on real milk and adding water. When you stir them or add them to recipes, they break down and become watery, making poor marinades, dips and sauces. This is a manufacturer's way of fooling the consumer by giving them less real food yet charging the same or more.
- True Greek-style yogurt (so thick that when a spoon of it is turned upside down, the yogurt sticks to the spoon and doesn't fall off) works great - non-fat by Liberté or 2% Danone's Oikos. They are very high protein, contain only milk ingredients and bacterial enzymes. Come in plain and fruit flavoured (though I find the fruit flavoured too sweet - try getting plain and adding just a bit of honey to sweeten).
- Read ingredients on soda/saltine crackers! Avoid those with:
  - artificial colours/flavours
  - salted tops and high sodium
  - preservatives (BHT, bisulphate, benzoate, etc.) - believe it or not, whole wheat soda crackers tend to have preservatives, while their white flour counterparts do not.
  - trans-fats - shortening or modified, hydrogenated, partially hydrogenated oil of any kind
    - NOTE: Just because a product's front label says no trans-fat doesn't mean it doesn't use transfat. Check the ingredients. If any of the above oils/fat are listed, it has trans-fat, just in a small enough quantity to say "no transfat per serving". By the time you and your family consume the whole box, you will all have consumed a significant amount of transfat.
- True Greek-style yogurt (so thick that when a spoon of it is turned upside down, the yogurt sticks to the spoon and doesn't fall off) works great - non-fat by Liberté or 2% Danone's Oikos.
- Granulated onion and garlic are best as they are dehydrated product that has been ground. The "powders" are usually cut with cornstarch and can become sticky and gummy when wet. Both are found with the bagged spices in most supermarkets. The label may say garlic powder - shake it and if a fine white powder coats the bag - avoid that one and look for a brand that doesn't. Indian spice sections of supermarkets often have bags of granulated garlic.