

A delicious air-fried option for Buffalo chicken egg rolls



Buffalo Chicken & Blue Cheese Egg Rolls (Air-fried). Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

Melted cheddar, tender shredded chicken, cilantro, and blue cheese crumbles all tossed in your favorite Buffalo wing sauce, then wrapped in an egg roll and air-fried to the perfect crispiness is what I'm talking about! Of course you can fry your egg rolls in oil, but since we are health buffs (most of the time) we opted to make these in our air fryer and they turned out great. They are not quite as crispy or flaky, but still really crunchy and so much healthier.

If you don't have an air fryer, you might think about getting one. We have the Instant Vortex 6-Qt. Air Fryer and we really love it, because you get all of the crunchiness of fried foods, but with so much less fat. We love the taste of fried foods, but not the feeling after eating all that oil. You can cook so many things in your air fryer, too, like the falafel we posted a few months ago, French fries, yuca fries (so de-

licious), Brussels sprouts and so much more. We are really just beginning to make use of ours, but there are so many



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things that we want to try making in it.

If you don't have an air fryer, you can also bake these

in the oven on a baking sheet for another healthy version!

INGREDIENTS

Buffalo Chicken & Blue Cheese Egg Rolls

(Makes 10 Egg Rolls)

- 10 each egg roll wrappers
- 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken breast (can use thigh meat too, if you prefer)
- 1 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/3 cup Buffalo sauce
- 1 tablespoon Louisiana hot sauce
- Salt to taste
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup yogurt blue cheese dressing (recipe below)
- Extra Buffalo Sauce
- Carrot & celery sticks for garnish

Yogurt Blue Cheese Dressing

- 1 cup crumbled blue cheese, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar (red wine vinegar will turn the dressing pink!)
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 dash white pepper
- 1/2 cup plain nonfat yogurt

DIRECTIONS

Buffalo Chicken & Blue Cheese Egg Rolls

Place shredded chicken, grated cheddar cheese, blue cheese and cilantro in a mixing bowl. Stir to combine. Season to taste with salt ... just grind some right into the bowl. Add 1/3 (or more if you like the heat) cup of your favorite Buffalo wing sauce and mix well. Stir in Louisiana hot sauce. Set aside.

Lay five of the egg roll wrappers out on a cutting board. Divide half of the chicken mixture evenly on each wrapper toward the bottom of the egg roll wrapper.

Starting from the bottom roll up part way. Then fold the right corner of the wrapper in toward the center. Then fold the left side in toward the center.

Using a basting brush or the tips of your fingers, brush the top triangle of the wrapper with the egg. Then continue to roll the egg roll up toward the top until the whole thing is snugly wrapped. Press down where the egg wash is. Set aside.

Repeat the process until all of the egg roll wrappers have been filled. At this point you can refrigerate them until you are ready to air fry or bake them, or cook them right away.

When ready to bake, heat the air fryer to 350 F and set the bake time to 8 minutes. The fryer will tell you when to add the food, and then you just lay half the batch in the basket in the fryer. Air fry until the machine tells you to turn the food. Do as it says and then continue to air fry until they are golden-brown and crispy. Set aside in foil to keep warm. Repeat the process until all egg rolls are baked.

If you don't have an air fryer, preheat the oven to 400 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the egg rolls on the parchment paper. Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the crust is golden-brown and the filling is heated and the cheese is melted.

Serve hot egg rolls with a side of homemade yogurt blue cheese dressing (recipe below), extra Buffalo sauce, celery and carrot sticks.

Yogurt Blue Cheese Dressing

Place blue cheese crumbles in a bowl and mash with a fork. Add olive oil and mix into a paste. Stir in lemon juice, vinegar and white pepper. Blend well. Add yogurt and stir to combine. If you like your dressing a little more on the thin side, then simply add more olive oil and white wine vinegar in equal amounts until you arrive at your desired consistency.

MSD Teacher of the Year Serina Culleton



Serina Culleton

Photo provided

By Lou Fancher

In the oddest of ways, instructing elementary school students during the pandemic has suited Rheem Elementary School third grade teacher Serina Culleton perfectly. She loves teaching outdoors, centering lessons within games and observations of nature, springing dexterously from hands-on to virtual to hybrid formats, and most of all, never sugar-coating or sending obscure messages to her students.

A teacher at Rheem for 20 years, Culleton was recently announced as Teacher of the Year for the Moraga School District. "The way they told me was so sweet. The new superintendent (Dr. Julie Parks) came into our classroom with our principal, Brian Sullivan, and a giant balloon. They announced it to all of the students; to all of us at once. All the kids thought it was so cool. After the announcement, they took a picture

with all of us together."

Culleton said it was such an honor "because we have so many strong teachers in our district. I was simply shocked. What's interesting is that my kids and my niece and nephew have gone through Rheem now and I've seen the teachers here in a different light. I've been so impressed. I saw a different side of them, especially during COVID."

Culleton and her husband, Tim Culleton, have two sons, ages 10 and 13. Her mother is Susan Sperry, who taught for 37 years in a variety of positions at Los Perales Elementary and Joaquin Moraga Middle School in the Moraga School District. Like her mother, Culleton's path to leading a classroom of young students followed a few twists and side journeys before reaching its destination.

After attending Campolindo High School, Culleton earned a degree in psychology at UC Berkeley. "I always enjoyed performing, being an extrovert. I like being around the energy of people, especially kids. I thought I might do something with education and business. But I wasn't motivated by profit and loss: it was people I enjoyed. Over time, I realized psychology would be draining. I'm like a sponge for other people's emotions so it's hard for me to let go of how other people are feeling."

Fascination with the psychology involved in teaching and a strong interest in understanding kids motivated Culleton to return to school; eventually earning teaching credentials and a master's in interpersonal communication from Saint Mary's College in Moraga. "At Saint Mary's I learned my strength is working with people; realistically seeing where they are coming from. I researched the connection students and teachers have and how that impacts their academic paths."

Even though Culleton's temperament and skill set primed her to handle what she says was the pandemic's repeated "go, go, go, stop, readjust" pattern, disrupted routines and procedures were tough. In the

summertime between the last two school terms, she says she and her colleagues crashed. The anxiety of disjointed schedules and thinking about the next stage of returning to classrooms and removing masks created new dynamics that continued as soon as classes resumed.

"There were questions and feelings getting hurt when some kids still wore masks and some didn't. We've been thinking about how we'd keep kids safe, but also how to get along amid differences. We don't want our kids to be fractured in the way our country is. We're trying to nurse the ideal of being kind, even if you don't agree with each other. We're asking our students to do this, even if adults don't model the same kindness."

Asked if the pandemic, and parents having to become pseudo class assistants at home, has led to changed perceptions about the teaching profession, Culleton said, "For a lot of parents it was eye opening to see how hard it is to teach not only your own child, but to teach so many kids. They saw how challenging it is to teach."

Culleton nurtures new ways of thinking about and acting in her students' rapidly changing world, encourages questioning and supports the need for books and other materials with more diverse characters and authors. "It's all in the approach. Let's question, have discussions, not charge in with information saying this is the only way it is. In my classroom, when we do a section on the Missions in California, they're aware that the native people weren't marching happily into the missions. They see the injustice. They think about right and wrong. They get upset about segregation before 1964 and we talk about why it was done and have a whole conversation around that.

"A few years ago a parent came in and talked about Chinese New Year and told us it's more often called Lunar New Year, a term I learned and use now," she added. "We have to look at more than one perspective. You can't know everything."

2022-23 Lamorinda Teacher of the Year Nominees:

- Sarah Frank, Acalanes Union High School District, Miramonte High School
- Claudia Windfuhr, Lafayette School District, Stanley Middle School
- Vanessa Olona, Lafayette School District, Lafayette Elementary School
- Cheri Facer, Lafayette School District, Happy Valley Elementary School
- Nancy Newcomb, Lafayette School District, Springhill Elementary School
- Cathy Bertics, Lafayette School District, Burton Valley Elementary School
- Serina Culleton, Moraga School District, Donald L. Rheem Elementary School

Moraga photographer featured in gallery at local boutique



Thomas Black, a Moraga-based photographer, is the featured artist at Hollie's Homegrown, an artisan boutique located in Lafayette at the corner of Moraga Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard. The exhibit runs May 2 to Labor Day.

Having taken up photography upon retiring some years ago, Black specializes in Rural Americana subjects – "anything old, in a non-urban setting, and preferably in no better than worn-at-heel condition," he said.

Favored subjects include old barns and anything else that is farm-related. He is particularly drawn to old cars and trucks, many of which have been put out to pasture literally.

Although concentrating on California, he travels coast to coast in quest of subjects that "serve as a

nexus to the past and evoke a feeling of nostalgia," he said. "Although few of us grew up on a farm, all of us can relate to Rural Americana images. The more urbanized we become as a society, the stronger the pull."

Black's photography has garnered numerous awards, including juried competitions. Images have been published here and abroad, including in a magazine in the U.K. dedicated to Nikon photography.

His work can be viewed during normal business hours, Sunday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The store proprietor, Hollie Lucas-Alcalay, has scheduled Saturday, May 14, as Meet The Artist day. Black will be on site from noon to close. His website is www.tfblackphotography.com.

Moraga photographer Thomas Black

Photo provided