

# Laura Werlin's recipe for Crispy Chicken with Blue Cheese and Spinach



**Laura Werlin** is one of the country's foremost authorities on cheese. She is the award-winning author of four books on the subject, is a sought-after speaker and spokesperson for consumer and trade organizations, and is a frequent television and radio guest. An expert in cheese and wine pairing and American artisan cheese, Werlin received the James Beard award for her book *The All American Cheese and Wine Book*, which was the first of its kind in America to focus entirely on cheese and wine pairing. Werlin also wrote the ground-breaking *The New American Cheese*, the popular *Great Grilled Cheese* and the James Beard award-nominated *Laura Werlin's Cheese Essentials*.

In addition to television and radio appearances, Laura has been featured on instructive cheese-related videos on the popular website chow.com. She also writes for national magazines including Food & Wine.

Werlin is known for her approachable yet authoritative teaching style and is frequently asked to conduct cheese and wine pairing, cheese education, and cooking classes across the country. She is also a regular instructor at The Cheese School of San Francisco.

## Crispy Chicken with Blue Cheese and Spinach Recipe

### Ingredients:

- ¾ cup apple juice (or use water)
- ½ cup currants
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 large clove garlic, sliced paper thin crosswise
- 1 pound spinach, washed, and patted dry (let a little water cling to the leaves)
- 2 ¾ teaspoons kosher or coarse sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 cup Japanese panko (or use corn flake crumbs)
- ¼ cup finely grated American Parmesan, Asiago, or Dry Jack cheese
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 2 pounds) pounded slightly to a ½-inch thickness
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 6 ounces blue cheese crumbled and divided

## **Instructions:**

Preheat the oven to 400° F.

In a small All-Clad sauce pan, heat the apple juice until almost boiling. Place the currants in a small heat-proof bowl. Pour the apple juice over them. Let sit for 20 minutes, then drain. Set aside.

In a large All-Clad sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add the spinach and cover. Cook for 3 minutes, or just until the leaves begin to turn a vibrant shade of green but are not quite cooked through. Uncover and turn off heat. (The spinach will continue to cook after the heat has been turned off.) Add ¾ teaspoon of the salt, red pepper flakes, and half of the currants. Toss gently (All-Clad tongs work well), and set aside.

**To prepare the chicken:** Mix together the panko, Parmesan cheese, remaining 2 teaspoons of the salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Transfer the mixture to a flat plate. Put the beaten eggs in a shallow bowl. Have a large plate ready. Dip the chicken breasts into the eggs and then coat with the bread crumb mixture. Put them on the plate.

Line a large baking sheet with paper towels.

In a large All-Clad sauté pan, heat the oil and butter together over medium-high heat, until the butter begins to bubble. Sauté the chicken breasts for 5 minutes on one side, or until the undersides are crispy and brown. Turn and cook 4 to 5 minutes more, or until the other side is also crispy and brown and the chicken is cooked through. Transfer to the paper towel-lined baking sheet to drain. Remove the paper towels and discard.

Sprinkle two-thirds of the blue cheese on top of the chicken. Bake for 5 minutes, or until the cheese has melted.

Warm the spinach on medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Distribute the spinach among 4 dinner plates. Sprinkle with remaining blue cheese. Place the chicken on top of the spinach, sprinkle with remaining currants, and serve right away.

Serves 4.