

Chicken And Waffles Combo Is At Least 150 Years Old But Its Origin Is Unknown



Savory and sweet collide for a soulful celebration of flavor on October 20th as we celebrate National Chicken and Waffles Day. Imagine a world where ingredients of every spice and spirit find their way into the honeycombs of thick and crispy waffles. Well, that day has arrived.

- Chicken and waffles have been around for more than 150 years. And while no one knows who first put chicken and waffles on the same plate together, we do know the meal was a staple of both African-American cooks and the Pennsylvania Dutch.
- Chicken and waffles is a soul food dish
- The dish is most commonly made by serving fried chicken with a waffle, the waffle then typically being covered with butter and/or syrup (as is common practice among those who eat waffles for breakfast in the United States). This unusual combination of foods is beloved by many people who are influenced by traditions of soul food passed down from past generations of their families.
- The exact origins of the dish are unknown; there are several versions of its origins. Food historians have unearthed chicken and waffles recipes in cookbooks as far back as the late 1700s after Thomas Jefferson returned from France with a waffle iron. They traced the trend and found that eventually, the hearty, sweet/savory combination became a celebration-type supper in African American families.
- A version of this dish mostly known within areas that have Pennsylvania Dutch influences consists of a plain waffle with pulled, stewed chicken on top, covered in gravy.
- There are a myriad of ways to eat this dish: Some people go right for the chicken, saving the waffle for dessert. Others do exactly the opposite: They start with the waffle, because they want to save the chicken for last. Some shred the chicken, put it on the waffle, pour the syrup over the whole thing and nosh away.
- Chicken and waffles first appeared in Pennsylvania Dutch country during the 17th century. During this time, cooks made waffles topped with pulled chicken and gravy.
- In 1938, a different version of the combination appeared in Harlem, NY at the Wells Supper Club. Known as “Wells” to the regulars, this was a favorite of late night musicians who arrived too late for dinner and too early for breakfast—so chicken and waffles was the perfect compromise.
- The combination became increasingly popular, spreading to Los Angeles when Harlem native Herb Hudson opened a restaurant dedicated to the pairing. The restaurant, Roscoe’s House of Chicken and Waffles, is a staple for music industry professionals and performers in the LA area.
- It was a 19th century Pennsylvania Dutch delicacy. Fast forward to 1917 when a Chicago restaurant advertised a Southern chicken dinner with waffles and real maple syrup (35 cents each!) Today, Metro Diner serves more than 1,300 orders of fried chicken and waffles every day!
- In 2019, Metro Diner sold more than 485,000 orders of our Fried Chicken & Waffles – that’s nearly two million pieces of fried chicken!

Sources:

National Day Calendar

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