

# Sticky Honey-Chili Chicken from Cleo Coyle's *Dead to the Last Drop*

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi, who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini



*This one-skillet stovetop dinner has a quick marinating process and a fast final glaze that is fantastic. The heat of the jalapenos is nicely controlled by the honey, which keeps the spice level at a pleasant warmth. The cumin lends an earthy flavor, and the lemon juice brings brightness to the balance. This recipe, which also includes garlic, delivers great nutrition, too. Our readers may recognize it from our recent bestselling Coffeehouse Mystery [Dead to the Last Drop](#). Sticky Honey-Chili Chicken was one of the highly popular "Chalkboard Specials" made by assistant chef Luther Bell at the new Village Blend Jazz Space, a relaxed supper club co-managed by our amateur sleuth Clare—who soon feels more than the heat of the kitchen when she becomes a prime suspect in capital crimes of kidnapping and murder... May you eat and read with joy! ~ Cleo*

## **Makes 6 chicken thighs**

- 2 Jalapeno chili peppers, chopped and divided (\*See note below)
- 10 cloves garlic, minced and divided
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 Tablespoon fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 1/4 cup olive oil, plus 2 Tablespoons
- 6 chicken thighs, skin on
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground sea salt (or kosher salt)
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup honey (any kind will work, but I like to use a raw local honey)

**\*Note:** When working with jalapenos or any hot pepper, take care not to touch your eyes or you'll feel the burn. Wash hands after handling. Also, make sure you discard the seeds and white pulp, which is where the less pleasant heat hides.

**Step 1 - Make the Fast Marinade:** Cut 1 of your 2 jalapenos in half, remove the seeds and chop the flesh. Place the chopped jalapenos in a re-sealable plastic bag. Wash hands well. Mince 5 of your 10 garlic cloves. Place the minced garlic in the bag and measure in the cumin, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and lemon juice. Shake the bag well to blend.



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to Cleo's new  
culinary mystery,  
*Dead to the Last Drop*,  
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**Step 2 - Chicken in the Bag:** Rinse the chicken and pat dry. Salt and pepper both sides and place the pieces in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and gently shake it, upside down and back and forth, manipulating the chicken inside to make sure the pieces are well coated. Marinate in refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours.

**Step 3 - Brown the Chicken:** Place your ¼ cup of olive oil in a large nonstick skillet, heat on stovetop at medium-high. When the oil is very hot, place the thighs skin side down and cook for 8 minutes, or until the skin is browned. Flip the thighs over and reduce the heat to medium until the thighs are cooked through, this will take about 20-25 minutes. (Do not cover the pan at any time.)

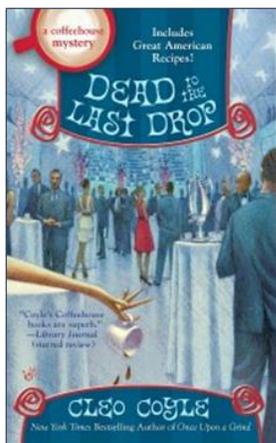
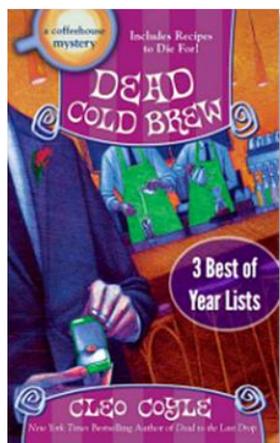
**Step 4 - Glaze and finish:** While the chicken cooks, mince the remaining 5 cloves of your garlic, and chop the final jalapeno (after removing the seeds). Mix these in a small bowl with your 1/3 cup of honey and thin this glazing mixture slightly with 1 or 2 tablespoons of chicken pan drippings. When the thighs are ready, turn the heat back up to medium-high and pour the honey-garlic-jalapeno glazing mixture over the chicken. Cook 5-7 minutes more, uncovered, until the mixture reduces to a savory sauce, and...eat with joy!

**KEEP YOUR CULINARY COOL:** Did you know dairy is the only substance that neutralizes a chili burn? If your mouth is on fire, don't reach for water, reach for milk or yogurt or ice cream. And, of course, a sour cream dollop is a delightful addition to many highly spicy meals.

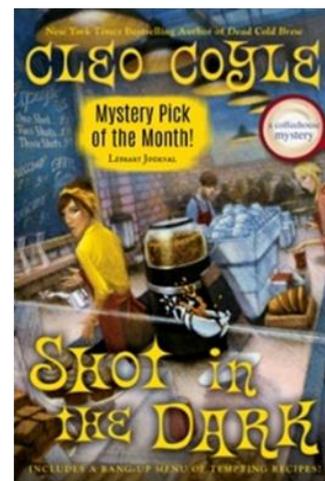
**Q.** Why does dairy soothe a pepper burn? Will coconut milk, nut milks, or soy milk work? **A.** Chemically speaking, capsaicin in peppers binds with lipoprotein receptors on the tongue, which causes the pepper burn. Drinking water does not help because capsaicin doesn't dissolve in water. The most effective cure is mammal's milk because it contains casein, a substance which acts on capsaicin the same way soap cuts grease. But it must be mammal's milk because coconut milk, other nut milks, and soy milk do not contain casein.



*Eat with joy! —Cleo*



The [Coffeehouse Mysteries](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com) are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes. To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at [www.CoffeehouseMystery.com](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com) And her recipe blog at [www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com](http://www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com)



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