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Chick-fil-A Heats up Menu with New Spicy Chicken Sandwich

Chain offers FREE sandwiches week of May 31 via online reservation system

ATLANTA (May 24, 2010) – Chick-fil-A® is “fired up” over its newest product offering. Beginning June 7, Chick-fil-A restaurants nationwide will offer a new Spicy Chicken Sandwich, the chain’s first new sandwich to hit menu boards since its Chargrilled Chicken Sandwich was introduced in 1989.

Building on the heritage of the chain’s namesake sandwich, the new Chick-fil-A® Spicy Chicken Sandwich is hand-breaded, seasoned with a fiery blend of several peppers, pressure-cooked in 100 percent refined peanut oil and served on a toasted buttered bun with dill pickle chips. The Spicy Chicken Sandwich starts at \$2.99 and is also offered in a “deluxe” version that includes lettuce, tomato and Pepper Jack cheese for \$3.59.

“Our Spicy Chicken Sandwich offers a unique, well-balanced and ‘cravable’ spicy flavor that is perfect for our growing customer constituency that enjoys spicy food. Most spicy chicken sandwiches available today just heat up your mouth and do not boast a distinctive flavor. We wanted to focus on providing customers with a memorable spicy taste experience that you could only enjoy from Chick-fil-A,” said William F. “Woody” Faulk, Chick-fil-A’s vice president of brand strategy and design, who is responsible for the chain’s menu strategy. “As for the heat level, well, we offer a wide choice of beverages to cool things down! The sandwich will definitely wake up your taste buds – so much so that we’re printing a lighthearted message on the packaging warning customers that the sandwich ‘may start mouth fires’.”

Faulk also noted that there are various ways for customers to temper or enhance the spicy flavor of the sandwich. “One of the delicate aspects of developing this recipe was finding the right spice level to suit the majority of our customers. While we believe we found the happy medium as far as the ‘kick level’ is concerned, there are ways to cool down or even heat up the sandwich. Adding ranch dressing or lettuce and tomato help lower the temperature, but we also offer Pepper Jack cheese or Buffalo sauce for those who can’t get enough spicy flavor.”

The Spicy Chicken Sandwich will officially be added to the Chick-fil-A menu on June 7, but the chain is giving customers nationwide a chance to taste the sandwich for free during a special Premiere Week event prior to the rollout. Beginning May 24, customers can visit www.getspicychicken.com to reserve a time to taste the sandwich at a local Chick-fil-A restaurant between May 31 and June 5. Each customer who registers and attends Premiere Week will receive a complimentary Spicy Chicken Sandwich. Offers are limited, and customers are encouraged to register early.

“We are especially excited about the reservation-based sampling of our new sandwich with our loyal customers,” added Faulk. “We want to invite our customers to taste the flavor and quality of this spicy sandwich, but we don’t want a cattle-call setting where we won’t be able to extend ‘second mile’ service to our customers. This reservation system provides a more personalized way to introduce our exciting menu addition. It’s like hosting a dinner party in your home – you know in advance who is coming.”

Chick-fil-A's Spicy Chicken Sandwich has been in some form of test for years. The chain market-tested the sandwich in Jacksonville, Fla. and Baltimore, Md., and then expanded the test to include its restaurants in California last spring. Customers gave the sandwich a 4.4 out of 5 rating on overall taste, and the Spicy Chicken Sandwich continues to account for at least six percent of overall sales at the test restaurants more than a year later. This figure is similar to the percentage of sales garnered by Chick-fil-A Kid's Meals.

Considering the capital investment and marketing expenses required to introduce a totally new sandwich, the Spicy Chicken Sandwich rollout will be Chick-fil-A's largest product introduction in 20 years. The rollout requires a number of kitchen equipment additions, including the installation of new pressure cookers and ventilation systems at most restaurants in order to prevent the spicy recipe from crossing over to other menu items. Chick-fil-A is also launching one of its most aggressive marketing campaigns in chain history to support the sandwich rollout. In addition to the online, reservation-based Spicy Premiere Week sampling effort, Chick-fil-A is making rare television and radio ad buys in key markets across the country and using online marketing campaigns to promote the sandwich.

"We are extremely fortunate to be in a position to make these multi-million dollar investments during tough economic times," said Steve Robinson, Chick-fil-A's senior vice president of marketing. "Much of our competition is hesitant to make new product investments these days and instead have chosen to focus on dollar menus and product discounts to drive traffic. However, Chick-fil-A is focused on adding value to the restaurant experience through well-developed product introductions and the continued value placed on our second mile service. We firmly believe our business will continue to grow as long as we take deliberate measures to ensure the quality of our products and our customer service standards remain at the highest level."

Robinson added that "Chick-fil-A has the utmost confidence at this time in our move to add this totally new Spicy Chicken Sandwich and we believe the product will help sustain the positive sales momentum we have sustained during the unstable economy."

Coming off a record-breaking \$3.2 billion sales year in 2009, the chain is already enjoying a positive start to 2010 with a 3.6 percent same-store sales gain and a 9.3 percent overall sales increase through April. "Based on the performance of the Spicy Chicken Sandwich during the test, we are anticipating that this product will help attract new customers for our restaurant Operators throughout the country and will also encourage more frequent visits from our current customers. We have no doubt that our Spicy Chicken Sandwich will become an industry leader before too long and a new favorite among our customers," said Robinson.

The Chick-fil-A Spicy Chicken Sandwich will complement the other spicy entrées currently offered by the chain, including the Spicy Chicken Cool Wrap[®] and Southwest Chargrilled Salad. Based on the general popularity of the spicy category, Chick-fil-A also plans to expand its line of spicy offerings by adding a Spicy Chicken Biscuit to its line of "made-from-scratch," hand-rolled biscuit-based breakfast menu in January 2011.

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About Chick-fil-A, Inc.

Atlanta-based Chick-fil-A, Inc. is the nation's second-largest quick-service chicken restaurant chain (based on sales), currently with more than 1,485 restaurants in 38 states and Washington D.C. Chick-fil-A produced record sales in 2009 of \$3.22 billion – an 8.6 percent overall increase and an 2.52 percent same-store sales gain that helped extend the chain's streak of consecutive sales gains to 42 years since founding in 1967.

Credited with inventing the boneless breast of chicken sandwich and first introducing the chicken nugget concept, Chick-fil-A serves nutritious and freshly prepared food products in mall locations, stand-alone restaurants, drive-thru-only restaurants, Chick-fil-A Dwarf House[®] and Truett's Grill[®] full-service restaurants, and through licensed outlets in college campuses, hospitals, airports, businesses and industrial sites. More information about Chick-fil-A is available on the chain's websites, located at www.chick-fil-a.com, www.chick-fil-a-pressroom.com, www.truettcathy.com and www.facebook.com/chick-fil-a.