

Cary Brown's Country Smoked Chicken-Free Chicken (Vegan)

I am furious at myself for not taking a picture of this "chicken" before eating it! I thought sure there would be a photo of the actual bird out there, but nary a snapshot of the unpackaged meat alternative could be found on my part. "What does it matter?" you might be thinking. Who wants to look at a loaf of meat alternative anyways? Well, Cary Brown's Chicken-Free Chicken is different. This is no ordinary loaf, it is actually molded in the shape of a mini-chicken, as you would buy it in the store! From the top it takes on the look of a mini carnivorous baked chicken. The under-side is sort of a weird pressed look, but no need to turn it over of course.

I know, you are dying of curiosity now … well, this picture sort of gives you the idea (but you really have to see for yourself) …

Was the shape novel? Yes. Was it a little weird? Definitely. But I can't help but wonder if it does subliminally appeal more than a plain loaf of meat alternative. Once we were done having a little giggle about the shape, it was time to dig into this mock-bird. It sliced nicely, with the resistance of a processed meat, though little muscle was needed. This is where the whole shape thing was a bit odd though. The slices were very bizarrely shaped. Luckily, once cut into chunks, they just became nice looking pieces of faux meat.

With my own curiosity peaked, I grabbed a small piece and took a nibble. It was surprisingly good … tasting remarkably like … well … chicken. Not exactly of course, and with a very smoky influence, but this could easily be mistaken for some type of meat. The texture and taste combined to make what I would describe as a smoky packaged sausage (versus a freshly ground type sausage).

I could think of no better application for this meat alternative than atop some billowing salads, slathered with a bit of Vegenaïse made dressing. My husband "the carnivore" uttered with a note of surprise, "it's good, smoky chicken." We both agreed that this was a perfectly passable, if not downright enjoyable faux meat, but the smoky flavor could have been taken down a notch or two. While the smoky meaty aftertaste was kind of cool, the product had a bit too much sweetness, and … for lack of a better way of putting it … smoke.

Since our vegan trial has turned us into full time almost vegans (we're not perfect, okay!), this is a product I would consider purchasing again. However, I would hesitate, since it is produced in Asia, and consequently not a label or note could be found to state that this soy-based product is non-GMO. If Follow Your Heart floods me with emails to say that Carey Brown's is indeed non-GMO, then I would definitely think of it for our weekly soy-based treat. After all, it makes one heck of a "chicken" salad!

Where to Purchase: Look for this package (the one in the middle of course) ...
... in the refrigerated section of your local natural food store or natural food aisles (of larger grocers). If you are having trouble locating it, you can actually purchase it online, direct from Follow Your Heart.