

FOOD & MUSIC REVIEWS

BY MATT TIERNEY '22



If 2019 was the year of the fast-food chicken sandwich, 2020 is the year of the chicken nugget, specifically the spicy chicken nugget. A distinctly fast-food item, the chicken nugget is something you'd be hard-pressed to find anywhere without a drive-thru, and it's certainly not considered to be a gourmet item. Before spicy chicken nuggets garnered attention, the popular, underlying consensus was that chicken nuggets are ultimately a childish and unsophisticated item, too bland to be enjoyed on their own by adults. While Wendy's brought back their famous spicy nuggets in 2019, it was Burger King and McDonald's that sparked a debate about the best spicy chicken nuggets with their release of the item this year.

Naturally, I was compelled to try them all to determine which spicy nugget should be my go-to.

My first stop was Wendy's, as I had already been a fan of the nuggets since my early childhood. For \$2.70, I was able to secure six spicy nuggets. Next, I went to McDonald's, and got the same number of nuggets for only \$2:00. Finally, I stopped by the Burger King in Castle Rock with good friend Deavin McAlear and, to our surprise, we were able to get eight spicy nuggets for only \$1:00. Needless to say, the Burger King spicy nuggets were the cheapest, but did they live up to the quality of the other options? For the most part, yes. The Wendy's

BURGER KING

★★★★★

MCDONALDS

★★★★☆

WENDY'S

★★★★☆

and Burger King nuggets are remarkably similar, with nearly identical textures and a low level of spice. While the spice is enough to make the nuggets taste good without sauce, it's nothing to grab water over. The only real distinction between Wendy's and Burger King other than the price, then, was the quality of the chicken. By this measure, Wendy's nuggets are slightly better. However, as Deavin remarked to me at the restaurant, "the consistency is still good." Both he and I agreed that we would certainly recommend Burger King's spicy nuggets to friends.

With the first two nuggets being so similar, I was eager to see if McDonald's would do anything to distinguish their nuggets from the competition. Surprisingly, they did. First, the McDonald's product is much spicier than your run-of-the-mill fast-food nugget. When paired with the newly released "Might Hot Sauce," they pack quite a punch. These nuggets are cooked in a cayenne pepper batter, making their flavor feel much more authentic. With that being said, it's hard to point to any real culture that McDonald's is pulling

from with these nuggets. A typical McDonald's meal seems to exist in a space almost entirely detached from any established cultural tradition. However, this is especially true for their nuggets, as the chicken feels less like actual chicken and more like a distant simulacrum. It's thin and dry, and the authenticity that the cayenne flavor brings is partially negated by the plasticity feeling of the chicken and breading.

So, while the McDonald's nuggets were interesting, and they certainly provided a new take on the spicy chicken nugget, I was ultimately most satisfied with Burger King's. The price is unbeatable, and the flavor and chicken quality certainly aren't terrible. I recommend getting them with some sort of sauce, though, as the spice isn't crazy. While the pioneer status of Wendy's spicy nuggets and the sheer popularity of McDonald's might overshadow Burger King's nuggets, it would be a mistake to not give them a try (especially given the low price). Don't sleep on Burger King.

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