

P.32 MEAT SCHOOLS
ALT-MEAT

P.49 BRIGHT FUTURE
FOR BISON

P.64 JENSEN MEAT
CROSSES THE LINE

01.23 meatingplace.com

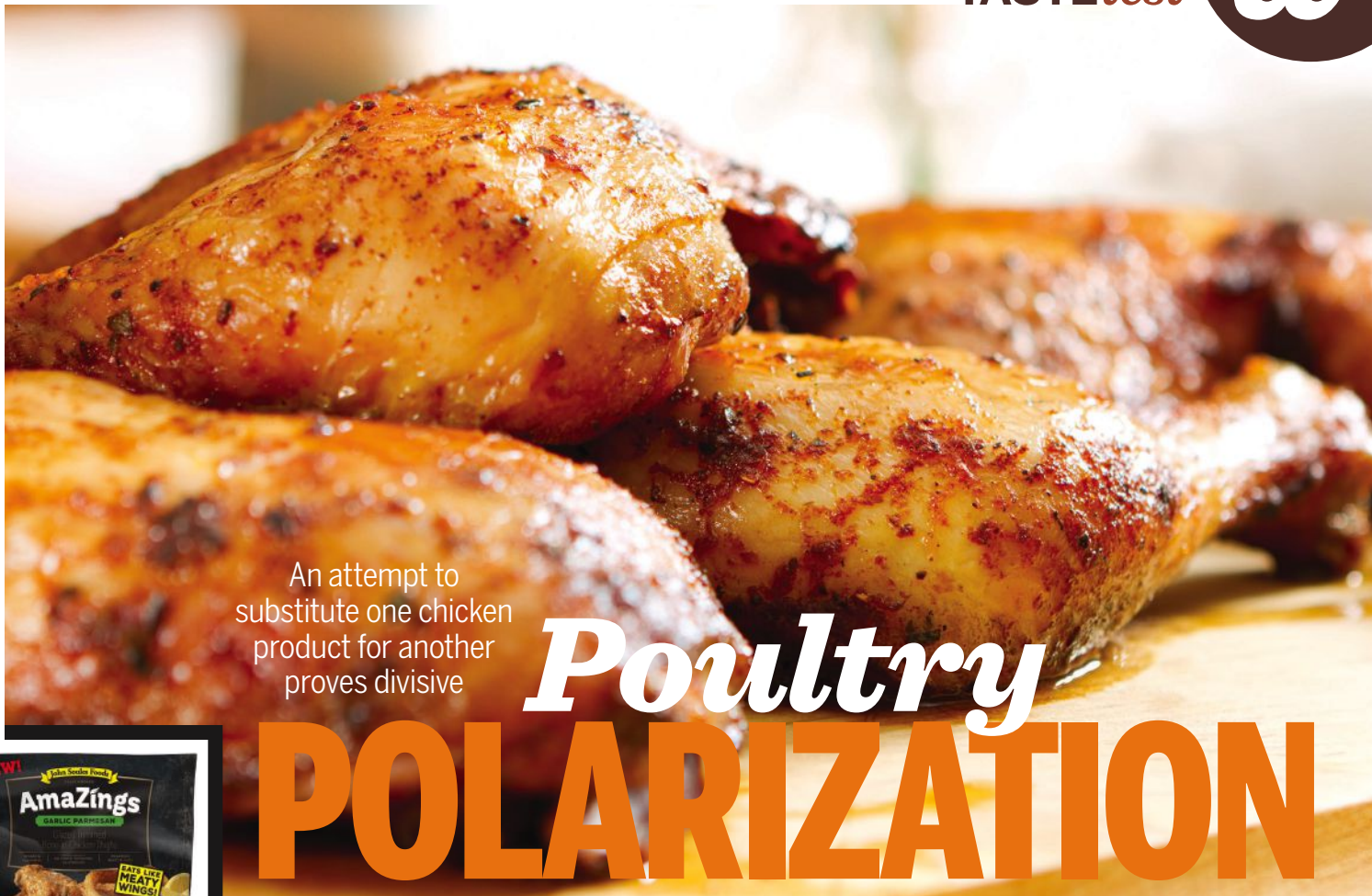
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Abel Olivera's stamp
on Jensen Meat's
success is in bringing
products, people and
communities together

Signature

BLEND





An attempt to substitute one chicken product for another proves divisive

Poultry

POLARIZATION

Photo by Getty



PRODUCT

John Soules Bone-in Chicken Thighs

PRICE

\$8.82 per 22-ounce package

PLUS

Ample meat and nice flavor

PROBLEM

High sodium and inconsistent textures

With some big-time sporting events just around the corner, we were interested in taste testing the new John Soules Foods Fully Cooked AmaZings Bone-in Chicken Thighs, which they claim “Eats like meaty wings!” Available in garlic parmesan, buffalo style, honey BBQ, and lightly seasoned flavors, we were most intrigued with the garlic parmesan “thigh-wings.” Let’s hear what our tasters thought about them.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Evaluators included ages teen and up, all who enjoy eating chicken wings.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND APPEARANCE

When it came to the John Soules packaging, a few of our tasters appreciated something that many products lack — detailed cooking instructions.

“The best part was that there were air-frying directions on the bag, which was a plus for us,” one taster said. “[That way], I didn’t have to go online to look up air fry wings directions.”

Other tasters complimented the packaging’s “clean” look, and how well the resealable function performed.

Ironically, while the product received kudos for clarity in cooking, other aspects of its communication were less appreciated.

“Eats like meaty wings!” one taster said, repeating the box’s messaging. “What does that mean? I thought it was a wing?”

Another taster remarked on the “very long” and “not clean” ingredients list, and a third elaborated on the confusion over how chicken thighs were being equated with wings.

“I wish they had more of a story about why they are using thighs this way,” the taster said. “Are they using the bits they cut off to reduce food waste? Or, do they sell the prime bits to someone as a way to keep these out of the trash or animal feed?”

There was also quite a bit of disagreement on the size of the thighs, and how they lent themselves to eating. While some tasters thought the amount of chicken offered was inadequate, one

TASTE *test*

“The best part was that there were air-frying directions on the bag, *which was a plus for us.*”

taster remarked on how “massive” the pieces were. “These are the meatiest wings, but they’re not a wing; they’re a chicken thigh.”

Another taster shared, “The fun of eating wings is to pick them up with your fingers to eat. Only one of mine was small enough to pick up to eat. The rest looked like they needed a knife and fork.”

TASTE, TEXTURE AND MORE

Quite a few tasters, however, were very positive on the John Soules bone-in thighs. Many commented on the abundance of meat and the flavor, which one taster described as “a well-seasoned wing taste.”

“I prefer bone-in wings, even though I feel like there’s not much meat,” a taster explained. “But with these, there was plenty of tasty meat. They were easy to eat and literally was like advertised, that it’s a meatier wing.”

Another taster elaborated, “We all thought the air-fried chicken was very juicy, and because they were thighs vs. wings, everyone enjoyed the extra meat on the bone. They were seasoned perfectly and full of flavor.”

And a third taster added a fun visual to their eating experience: “One of my sons took a bite and simply said, ‘Mmm that’s good!’ as his eyes rolled back in his head.”


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HOT

TASTE *test*

A number of tasters, though, did have their criticisms, starting with the product's taste.

"They were way too salty, [and] so hard to eat because of it," said one taster, with another adding, "It came across very salty, and I wouldn't be able to eat a lot."

The thighs' texture was also examined, with two tasters using a disarming term: "mushy."

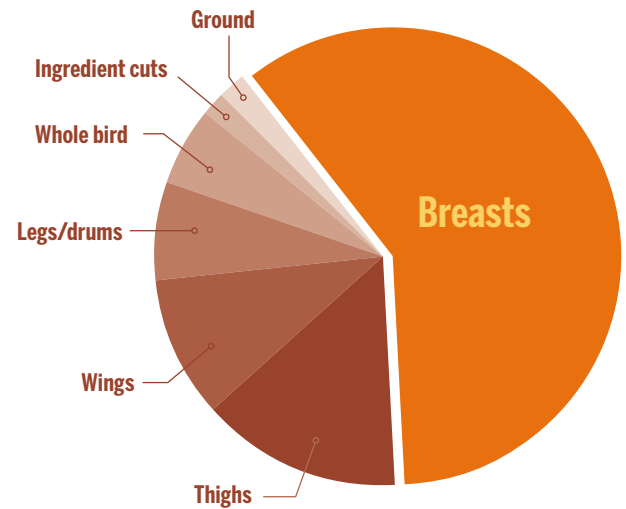
"Some were so mushy, even after baking them longer," a taster explained. "I couldn't tell if it was breading or skin. And the thought of mushy chicken skin shuts me right down."

And for another taster, the product's ample meat proved problematic: "The chicken was a little chewy, but [with] lots of meat on the thighs. It never got crispy like a wing. The coating was mushy, and that completely turned me off."

Follow the LEADER

SHARE OF CHICKEN SALES IN 2021,
by cut type

Chicken breasts were far and away the top-selling chicken cut in 2021. According to Winsight Grocery Business, breasts made up nearly 60% of chicken sales, with thighs in a distant second at 13.9%.



Source: Winsight Grocery Business

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“I wish they had more of a story about why they are using thighs this way.”

UPSHOT

Consistent with earlier assessments, there was a strict divide among tasters in their final assessments of the John Soules bone-in thighs.

“These wings were great!” one taster exuded. “The packaging, smell, taste, enjoyed all of it! 100% would try other flavors or buy these again!”

“I like the idea of a ‘wing’ with more meat to it, and I love thighs,” another taster said. “They are so forgiving — even if you overcook them, they are still delicious. There should be more thigh products!”

A couple tasters also liked the product’s conve-

nience. One remarked, “It would be handy to keep these in the freezer for when I need a really easy dinner solution, or for when my older son has to make his own dinner.” Another stated, “They were a hit, and I loved how quick and easy they were to make in the air fryer.”

For other tasters, though, a number of factors ultimately compromised their support.

“These are throwing me off, because it’s not a wing,” a taster said, describing the product’s dissonance. “And, the flavor doesn’t match the orientation, but it’s still juicy and tender.”

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TASTE *test*

“I like the idea of a ‘wing’
with more meat to it.”

Another taster complemented that view: “These were not fun for me to eat. I actually like wings that aren’t meaty.”

For a couple other tasters, the thighs’ nutritional facts came under scrutiny.

“It has a lot of extra stuff in it – they’re pretty artificial, so I would not buy again,” said one taster. A second added, “If I consumed three, that would be over 75% of my sodium intake and I’d probably still be hungry. Not a good trade off.”

CONCLUSION

What a mixed bag – literally. Some tasters

really loved these “meaty thigh-wings” for their flavor, size, and uniqueness, while for others, they just didn’t click. One of our “a-ha’s” was the feedback on air fryer directions. Many opted to use this preparation method, with a few even stating that they were appreciative for their inclusion on the bag.

Given supply issues with chicken wings over the last few years, AmaZings really shows their innovative nature utilizing a lesser-used cut of chicken. Kudos for their innovation.

We hope to see more products utilizing less-used cuts.



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