

# Chicken Fingers



So, either buy a package of prepared chicken tenders, or buy boneless chicken breast and slice them into strips. Put them in a bowl, and pour in enough buttermilk to cover them. Then stir in enough hot sauce to turn the buttermilk a light orange. Stir to make sure that all the chicken gets coated, cover, and marinate in the fridge. I figure, an hour, minimum, but I usually let them set overnight. And don't worry. You won't taste the heat of the hot sauce. When you're ready to start cooking, grind up a bunch of soda crackers – probably a whole stack, preferably salt free – in your food processor. (Short of that, put them in a zip top bag with all the air removed, and beat them up by hand, with a rolling pin, heavy pan, whatever.) You're looking for the consistency of sand. Now's the time to mix in any spices you like. I like a mix of granulated garlic and smoked paprika, plus salt (but only if you're using salt-free crackers). Old Bay works well, too. Pour the mix out onto a plate. Remove the chicken bits from the buttermilk, let most of the buttermilk drip off, and coat with the crushed crackers.

Now, in a frying pan, pour in enough canola oil to make a puddle about a quarter inch deep, and heat it until you just barely see wisps of smoke. Add the chicken bits into the pan, and fry on each side for 3 minutes or so. Remove to a paper towel to drain.

**Option 1** : This is basically how you could make whole fried chicken pieces, though you'll need more oil in the pan, and

you'll need to cook them for longer. For some reason, the white meat takes a bit longer than the dark meat pieces. Skip the cracker meal and use a mixture of flour and cornmeal, or just flour, spiked with salt, pepper, and spices, and you've got traditional southern fare. Expect the whole chicken pieces to take about 15 to 20 minutes, total, turning once.

**Option 2** : No need to stick with chicken. You can do the same with almost any meat. Chicken-fried steak, pork cutlets, tilapia filets, eggplant, even.