

Fried Chicken



This is how I make fried chicken...

Take a whole chicken, preferably about 3lbs, and cut it up into manageable parts. You should end up with 10 pieces, if you cut the whole breast into quarters (2 thighs, 2 legs, 2 wings, 4 breast), plus the back and neck, which you save for stock. If I'm feeling angelic, I'll remove the skin now. (Usually, I don't.) In a bowl deep enough to hold all of the chicken parts, put a quantity of buttermilk, enough to cover, and a lesser quantity of hot sauce, enough to turn the buttermilk pink/orange. Let the chicken sit in this liquid in the refrigerator for at least 45 minutes, but longer is better – even overnight.

Contemplate breading. There's a bunch of options, from as simple as plain flour, flour seasoned with salt and pepper, or with your favorite spice mix. (Old Bay, or Penzey's Bay Leaf Seasoning are good for this.) You can also add a little cornmeal to the flour, which is a southern touch.

Alternately – you could fore go the buttermilk and hot sauce. Instead, maybe brine the chicken for a couple hours, then rinse and dry thoroughly, and then do the troth method of seasoned flour/egg/bread crumbs. This method works especially

well with the pan frying instead of the deep frying.

Now, for the frying. You could opt to deep fry, though I only do this if I'm making a bunch, since it tends to stink up the apartment a bit (less so with peanut oil), is a bit of a hassle to clean up, and turns the kitchen into an oven. In that case, you'll want at least a gallon of peanut oil in your deepest pot, heated to 375° on a candy thermometer. In this case, you'll want to cook the white meat for 12-15 minutes, and the dark meat for a couple minutes longer.

Another method has you putting the chicken into a tall sided cast iron pan that has a lid, in about an $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of vegetable oil. brown chicken on all sides. Continue cooking over medium low heat, tightly covered, 30-40 minutes until tender. Then, remove the lid and increase heat during the last 10 minutes of cooking time in order to crisp up the chicken.

In either case, you'll want to drain and cool the chicken a bit, on a cookie sheet rack, inverted over a couple layers of newspaper. Serve warm, or room temperature, or cold from the icebox.

If you've deep fried, you'll have to deal with the cauldron of oil. Don't even think about doing anything until it's completely cooled. Once it has, ladle the oil through a funnel lined with a little cheese cloth (or a coffee filter) back into its jug. You can reuse the oil maybe twice more, provided you use it within 6 months, and you keep the jug stored in a dark place.

Have you got a different method or technique? Post a comment!