



ANSON MILLS

Southern Fried Chicken

Yield

4 main dish portions

Time

The recipe must be prepared over the course of 2 days: 8 hours for the saltwater soak, overnight for the buttermilk soak, and 45 minutes to flour and fry the chicken

Equipment Mise en Place

For the saltwater soak and to cut up the chicken, you will need a large bowl and a sturdy chef's knife. A cleaver might also come in handy.

To prepare the frying fat, you will need a digital kitchen scale, a medium saucepan, a fine-mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth, and a 2-cup liquid measuring cup.

For the buttermilk soak, you will need an 8-inch square glass or ceramic baking dish.

To fry the chicken, you will need two rimmed baking sheets and two wire racks; an 8-inch square glass or ceramic baking dish; an 11- or 12-inch fairly straight-sided cast-iron or enamel-coated cast-iron skillet with a depth of about 2-inches with a lid; and an instant-read thermometer.

To make the gravy, you will need a wooden spoon, a whisk, and a fine-mesh strainer.

Ingredients

for the saltwater soak

2 tablespoons kosher salt

1 cup hot spring or filtered water, plus 4 cups cold spring or filtered water

One 3-pound whole chicken

for the frying fat

8 ounces leaf lard

2 ounces (4 tablespoons) unsalted European-style butter

2 ounces high-quality thick-cut bacon

for the buttermilk soak

1 tablespoon fine sea salt

3 or 4 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced

2 cups buttermilk

for frying the chicken

8 ounces (about 1¾ cups) Anson Mills Thirteen Colony Rice Waffle Flour or Colonial Style
Fine Cloth-Bolted Pastry Flour
1½ teaspoons fine sea salt
1¼ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

for the gravy

1.25 ounces (¼ cup) Anson Mills Colonial Style Fine Cloth-Bolted Pastry Flour
2 cups Rich Homemade Chicken Stock, hot
1 Turkish bay leaf
1 cup buttermilk
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 ounce (2 tablespoons) unsalted European-style butter

Directions

- 1. Day One**—*Cut up and soak the chicken in salt water:* Add the salt to a large bowl, pour in the hot water, and stir until the salt dissolves. Add the 4 cups cold water and stir.
- 2.** Using a sturdy chef's knife, cut off the wing tips from the chicken; discard or reserve them for stock. Cut off each wing flat, then remove each drumette at the shoulder joint. Separate each leg from the body at the hip joint, then cut each leg into drumstick and thigh pieces. Cut through the ribs on either side of the backbone to separate the backbone from the breast; discard the backbone or reserve it for stock. Turn the breast skin side down and cut lengthwise, through the breastbone, to separate the breast into halves. Cut each breast in half crosswise. Add the chicken parts to the bowl, cover and refrigerate for 8 to 10 hours.
- 3. Prepare the frying fat:** Place the lard, butter, and bacon in a medium saucepan and render over medium-low heat until the bacon is crisp and brown and the water has evaporated from the butter, 15 to 20 minutes. Strain the fat through a fine-mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth into a 2-cup liquid measuring cup. You should have about 1½ cups dark-golden liquid fat. Set the fat aside and eat the bacon.
- 4. Drain the chicken and soak it in buttermilk:** After the chicken has soaked in the salt water for 8 to 10 hours, drain off the water. Add the salt and garlic to an 8-inch square baking dish, pour in the buttermilk, and stir until the salt dissolves. Shake the chicken pieces dry over the sink and submerge them in a single layer in the buttermilk, turning the pieces to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
- 5. Day Two**—*Fry the chicken:* Transfer the chicken from the buttermilk to a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet, picking off any garlic that clings to the chicken. Turn the flour, salt, and pepper into a clean 8-inch square glass or ceramic baking dish and stir to combine.
- 6.** Transfer 1¼ cups of the frying fat to a heavy-bottomed 11- or 12-inch fairly straight-sided cast-iron or enamel-coated cast-iron skillet with a depth of about 2 inches. Line a second rimmed baking sheet with paper towels and set it aside. Bury the chicken piece by piece in the

flour, carefully pressing flour into the skin. Gently dust off the excess flour and set the chicken skin side up on a second wire rack. Allow the flour to dry on the chicken for 10 to 15 minutes.

7. Set the skillet over medium heat and warm the fat until it reaches 360 to 365 degrees. Lower the dark-meat pieces skin side down into the skillet, followed by the breast pieces. The fat should come about halfway up the sides of the chicken; if needed, add more of the frying fat. Partially cover the pan and increase the temperature to high to compensate for the heat loss. As the fat's temperature comes back up to 350 degrees, lower the heat again. The fat should emit a cheerful snap and sputter. (Test its temperature from time to time with an instant-read thermometer and make adjustments to keep it around 350 degrees.) Fry the chicken partially covered, without turning, until deep golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Carefully turn the chicken, raise the temperature slightly, and fry the second sides uncovered until deeply golden, about 8 minutes; as the heat gains momentum, lower the temperature again. When they are done, the thickest part of the breast pieces will register about 160 degrees and the thickest part of the thigh pieces about 175 degrees. Pull the pieces out of the fat and drain them on the paper towel-lined baking sheet. (If you'd like to keep the chicken hot while you make the gravy, transfer the pieces to a clean wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet and set the baking sheet in a warm oven.) Remove the skillet from the heat and pour or spoon off and discard all but 2 tablespoons of the fat.

8. *Make the gravy:* Sprinkle the flour onto the hot drippings remaining in the skillet and stir with a wooden spoon to make a smooth paste, or roux. Set the skillet over medium heat and cook the roux, stirring constantly, until it is molten and begins to color slightly, about 5 minutes. Whisk the hot stock into the roux in three additions. Add the bay leaf and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, whisking constantly. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer gently for 5 minutes. Whisk in the buttermilk and simmer 5 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper and whisk in the butter. Strain the gravy through a fine-mesh strainer into a warmed gravy boat.